

TODAY
10P

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Primary Schools Report

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TODAY
10P

Joyriders could get ten years 'Yob drivers' face tough new sentences

By Stewart Tandler and Jonathan Prynn

JOYRIDERS and other reckless motorists who kill or maim through dangerous driving would face dramatically increased maximum prison terms under measures planned by Michael Howard.

Under the Home Secretary's proposals, joyriders who cause fatal accidents would face up to ten years in prison, while dangerous driving resulting in serious injury would be punishable by a maximum of five years in jail.

The crackdown is aimed at "yob drivers" intent on causing mayhem on Britain's roads rather than the otherwise responsible motorist who causes a tragic accident through a concentration lapse.

Proposals for amending two pieces of legislation, the Theft Act and the Road Traffic Act, to increase the maximum penalties, will be announced in the next few weeks in response to pressure from magistrates.

The changes will also have the support of chief constables concerned about car thieves who flee at high speed.

No legislation would be possible before the general election, but the Government could signal its determination to take action if it is returned. A Labour government might well take up the legislation, which may not be considered contentious.

The plan to double the maximum penalty for joyriders who cause fatal accidents will beef up the offence of "aggravated vehicle taking", which was introduced in 1992.



Toad checked his mirror, indicated and slowly released his foot from the clutch

Legal experts said that while the change would not directly affect penalties for most joyriding cases, it could lead juvenile courts to impose longer periods of detention.

The change would also bring the offence into line with legislation on death by dangerous driving, which has carried a maximum penalty of ten years since 1993.

The increase in the top penalty for causing injury through dangerous driving to five years is aimed to end the situation whereby a driver can leave an accident victim in a coma or permanently paralysed, yet face a maximum of two years in jail.

Senior government sources said that while there was little hard evidence that increased

penalties had a deterrent effect on the worst offenders, the move would send a signal to all road users that bad driving would not be tolerated.

"We don't just want people to be aware of the penalty, we want them to know that they are doing something terribly wrong when they drive in that way," he said.

"Just as much as drinking and driving and joyriding, dangerous driving involves a selfish indifference to public health."

Examples of dangerous driving that could attract the maximum penalty include high-speed "tailgating", weaving in and out of lanes on a motorway or aggressively pushing in to a long line of slow moving traffic.

Any accident following use of drugs or alcohol, excessive speed, racing other vehicles or deliberate and prolonged bad driving would also qualify.

The proposals were welcomed by MPs and road safety groups, who said light "wrist-slapping" penalties for drivers who caused death and injury were an insult to the victims.

Steven Norris, the former road safety minister, said: "I welcome the move not just because there is a great sense of outrage about people left disabled by incredibly reckless drivers, but also about the relatively lenient sentences they get. It is hard to see any difference between causing injury through reckless driving and shooting someone. The premeditation is just as deliberate."



Cardinal Winning with three-month-old Joseph McGraw before making his anti-abortion offer. He said babies must be "surrounded by support"

£50,000 for church anti-abortion fund

By Gillian Bowditch

DONATIONS of more than £50,000 have been promised to back up a Roman Catholic cardinal's offer of practical and financial help for any woman planning an abortion.

Cardinal Thomas Winning, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, launched the open-ended appeal at a Glasgow conference organised by the Society for the Protection of Unborn Child-

ren. And he said that two people from England had contacted him. A man pledged £50,000, and a woman promised a substantial gift when she sold her house.

Cardinal Winning told the conference: "Today I issue an open invitation to any woman, any family, any couple who may be facing the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy. Whatever worries or cares you may have in this regard, we will help you. If you want help

to cope with raising the baby on your own, we will help you. If you want to discuss adoption of your unborn child, we will help you, if you need financial assistance or equipment, we will help you."

"If you cannot face your family or if pressure in your neighbourhood is making you consider abortion, come to us. We will find you somewhere to have your baby surrounded by support and encouragement. We will help you. This

invitation, I repeat, is open to all, irrespective of age, creed or colour. Let us help you to avoid making one of the biggest mistakes of your life."

Cardinal Winning, who attacked "gynaecological abattoirs", added that he hoped the rest of the Church would follow his example.

Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, gave the idea qualified backing, saying: "It is one thing to condemn abortion, another to

offer practical help. Cardinal Winning has given a good lead."

Cardinal Winning said that money would not be the only help on offer, nor would it continue all the child's life, but the Church would respond to individual needs.

However, a Woman's Right to Choose thought the offer would make little difference, financial considerations were only a small part of the reason women had abortions.

Rifkind extols Nato benefits

The prospect of joining Nato is already helping Central European countries to overcome ethnic and territorial disputes, according to Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, writes in *The Times* today.

"Once these countries feel secure, they will have the confidence to develop better relations with Russia, enhancing everyone's security," he says. **Page 20**

Albania pact

President Berisha of Albania announced agreement with opposition parties on a unity government and fresh elections by June. But his government was rapidly losing control in the south of the country. **Page 11**

Justin's time

A Yorkshire terrier called Justin won the Best in Show award at Crufts. The dog, whose Kennel Club name is Champion of Ozmillion Mystification, is owned by Osman Sameja of London.

The Times on the Internet
<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

Booker winner denies plot 'theft'

By Ian Murray

GRAHAM SWIFT, the winner of last year's Booker Prize, has responded angrily to a suggestion that he borrowed the storyline and style of his novel *Last Orders* from William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, published in 1930.

Writing today in *The Times*, which first pointed out the similarities between the two works in a review published in January last year, he says: "My novel can, understandably, be compared to Faulkner's but does not stand comparison to it. It's a different book."

Mr Swift said it had never occurred to him to include any acknowledgement to Faulkner. "If I did such a thing I would have to acknowledge a great many other writers and a great many other writers would have to acknowledge others. If people haven't read *As I Lay Dying* it doesn't matter and if they have read it the similarities are obvious enough for anyone to recognise them."

The suggestion of plagiarism came from John Frow, Professor of English at the University of Queensland. In a letter to *The Australian* he writes: "The simple fact is that *Last Orders* is a pastiche of *As I Lay Dying*." **Continued on page 3, col 4**

Royal minibus ride to see Prince William confirmed

By Alan Hamilton

LOOKING slightly nervous in a blue shirt and tie and his best suit, Prince William was confirmed yesterday at a private service for family and friends at St George's chapel in Windsor Castle.

The 14-year-old Prince, who is hailing constitutional upheaval on one day expected to become Supreme Governor of England's established church, was accompanied at the 45-minute service by his divorced parents, the Queen and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, his younger brother, Prince Harry, his five surviving godparents and 40 guests, including several former domestic staff members of the Wales household.

As if to emphasise that it was a family rather than a formal occasion, Prince William arrived at the chapel with his parents and brother in a Vauxhall Astra, while his godparents were delivered to the church door in a minibus.

The service, which was traditional in form and taken from the Book of Common Prayer, was as notable for its absence as for its distinguished congregation. It was conducted by the Right Rev Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, and Dean of the Chapel Royal, assisted by the Right Rev Patrick Mitchell, Dean of Windsor. The choice



Diana, Princess of Wales, with Prince William

of Bishop Chartres, at the express wish of the Prince of Wales, surprised many who had expected a future head of the Church of England to be confirmed by its most senior cleric, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Queen and her

four children were all confirmed by the Archbishop of the day, and Prince William was christened by Archbishop Robert Runcie. But both St James's Palace and Lambeth Palace denied any suggestion that the choice of Bishop Chartres was a snub to Dr George Carey, the present Archbishop, whose perceived association with the church's evangelical wing is at variance with the more traditional outlook of the Prince of Wales.

Dr Carey has been on sabbatical and leaves London today for a meeting of senior Anglican clergy in Jerusalem. The Prince's office said that he had been kept fully informed. Other absentees included the Duke of Edinburgh, who is travelling abroad on behalf of the World Wide Fund for Nature, his maternal grandmother, Mrs Frances Shand-Kydd, who declined an invitation, and Miss Tiggy Legge-Bourke, who has helped to look after the young Princes since their parents' divorce.

Palace officials dismissed as "speculation" reports that a pair of £65,000 lightweight shotguns recently bought by the Prince of Wales from Asprey's of Bond Street were intended as a confirmation present for his elder son.

Photograph, page 24

Gardiner says Major is heading for defeat

By Arthur Leathley and Philip Webster

JOHN MAJOR was told by a defecting Conservative MP yesterday that he is heading for severe defeat — six days before he launches the general election campaign. Sir George Gardiner, the deselected MP for Reigate who has joined the Referendum Party, said Tory seats would "go down the pan" and that Mr Major was probably alone in thinking he could win.

But Sir George's bitter departure reopened internal Tory tensions on Europe, with several of his former colleagues privately voicing support for him and blaming Mr Major's refusal to give ground to Eurosceptics for the party's plight. Several hoped that his move would give impetus to the campaign for a Tory referendum.

Senior Tory sources dismissed Sir George's action privately as an act of vengeance. But they refrained from public attacks, hoping that his move would be swiftly forgotten. They are anxious that further policy announcements on education, law and order and on giving greater help to the elderly to cope with nursing home fees, will show that ministers have not

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THIS WEEK IN THE TIMES

TODAY	TOMORROW	THE TIMES	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WIN DESIGNER CLOTHING £20,000 worth of dream fashions, page 16	✓ PRIMARY SCHOOLS REPORT 16-page supplement on the primary league tables	Primary Schools Report	EMPIRE BUILDING Why Star Wars is back in business ✓ PRIMARY SCHOOLS REPORT Testing time for the tests	✓ PRIMARY SCHOOLS REPORT How prep schools measure up	✓ PRIMARY SCHOOLS REPORT Why nursery schools matter PLUS: Matthew Parris and Tessa Blackstone	RETURN OF ERIC THE GREAT Robert Crampton journeys to the heart of Cantona

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Shadow Foreign Secretary is accused of making irresponsible charges

Cook angers Tories in 'racist links' row

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ROBIN COOK angered Tory ministers last night after he linked speeches by Michael Portillo and John Redwood to racist remarks made last week by the Tory MP David Evans. The Shadow Foreign Secretary was accused of making "scurrilous and irresponsible charges of racism" by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary. Mr Dorrell called on Tony Blair to take action against Mr Cook but said the Labour leader made clear last night that he backed the remarks. Mr Cook said that speeches in which Mr Portillo and Mr Redwood had criticised Europe bred the type of re-

marks made by Mr Evans. His comment that "chauvinism and xenophobia are the parents of bigotry and racism" provoked angry reactions from all three Conservatives named in his speech.

Mr Cook told the Scottish Labour conference at the weekend that Mr Portillo's and Mr Redwood's views on Europe echoed "the poisonous views of David Evans on blacks and women". Mr Evans, MP for Welwyn Hatfield, claimed that many women MPs were "ordinary" and made an outspoken attack on a black rapist.

Mr Dorrell said Mr Cook



Cook: caused disquiet among his colleagues

had "said some absolutely outrageous things about my colleagues. There is no four-

ation at all in anything that Michael Portillo or John Redwood said for the charges Robin Cook made," Mr Dorrell told BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*. "I am wholly opposed to making personal unfounded and scurrilous attacks on politicians."

However, a spokesman for Mr Blair defended Mr Cook's comments and Chris Smith, the Shadow Health Secretary, said that Mr Cook was pointing out "the little Englander nature of much of the debate in the Tory party".

Mr Cook has been at the centre of a series of high-profile incidents in the past fortnight, causing disquiet among colleagues this week

when he suggested that Labour was about to secure a landslide victory. The comment came as Mr Blair was trying to guard against complacency and the Labour leader's reassertion that a general election victory could not be taken for granted was seen as a thinly-veiled put-down for Mr Cook.

Yesterday, Mr Cook pulled back from his earlier projection, offering a much more cautious assessment of Labour's chances. After making clear that Labour's devolution plans would need a majority of MPs in England, as well as Scotland and Wales, Mr Cook said: "At the present time it looks as if we can be

hopeful that we are going to get that majority in England as well as in Scotland."

Such a result would still represent a substantial swing to Labour but well short of its landslide victory of 1995. The party has only 196 of the 524 MPs in England, needing a further 62 for a majority.

Mr Cook also made clear yesterday that Labour's plans to introduce large numbers of party supporters into the Lords to balance the inbuilt Tory majority would happen only over the lifetime of a Parliament. When the idea was mooted last year, there were suggestions that there would be a huge influx of Labour peers in the first year.

Labour's guide to surviving Brussels

By VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

A SURVIVAL guide for future Labour ministers to cope with Brussels life and the rigours of European political meetings has been prepared by party officials.

After 18 years of Conservative rule, senior Labour strategists are concerned that their frontbenchers are not sufficiently acquainted with the rules and etiquette of European meetings, particularly over policy sessions which last

well into the night. Labour spokesmen have been issued with three golden rules: keep up the stamina, stay off whisky, and flatter European counterparts.

Future Labour ministers have also been told to brush up on their foreign languages, and that being able to chat with their counterparts will be a bonus. After what is perceived to have been a difficult period for the Conservatives in Europe, Labour officials believe it is important for its politicians to look as if

they are making an effort. Lunch, coffee and drinks have been singled out as ideal occasions for camaraderie. Britain takes on the presidency of the European Union in January next year and will be instrumental in negotiating the single currency.

The instructions are part of Labour's preparation for government, which also includes grooming in how to ambush meetings, and using procedural ploys to achieve decisions in Britain's interest.

But a senior diplomat

warned last week: "Politicians must not be too constant, they are likely to have to change alliances several times in one day. It is a game that they can get good at with practice."

Most of the briefing has been prepared by former civil servants and diplomats. Practical tips have also been offered by Pauline Green, British MEP and leader of the Socialist group in the European Parliament, and by Neil Kinnock, former Labour leader and now a European Commissioner.

Gardiner

Continued from page 1

run out of ideas. However, the timing and strength of Sir George's comments were acknowledged to be damaging at the start of a week seen as crucial to Tory attempts to rebuild morale. Sir George said: "Tory seats are going to go down the pan with an almighty flush when the election comes. And the writing was on the wall wasn't it at the Wirral? The Tory backbenchers are by no means illiterate."

Although Sir George said that he had had six or seven calls from Tory MPs supporting his move, none backed him publicly yesterday. One Eurosceptic, Sir Teddy Taylor, Tory MP for Southend East, said: "If George's defection results in us looking at the referendum issue again, it could possibly turn out to be a bonus instead of a problem."

Sir George's remarks came on the eve of key meetings between Mr Major and his senior advisers at which the timing of the election announcement will be discussed. It could come later this week, but if he wanted Mr Major could delay for two or even three weeks. However, when activists gather at Bath this Friday for a two-day Central Council meeting marking the campaign's start, they will know the date: the last day for calling an April 10 election is on Wednesday.

In Reigate, Sir George's presence is not seen as a threat to Tory hopes of keeping a seat they held with a 17,664 majority.



Sir George Gardiner in London yesterday

MP's departure deepens the rift between Reigate Tories

By TIM JONES

REIGATE Tories yesterday reacted with both anger and sadness to the news that their MP for 23 years, Sir George Gardiner, had defected to the Referendum Party.

It was plain that his departure has deepened the rift between his supporters and detractors which led to his defection as the Tory candidate at the approaching election.

Major-General Michael Steele, chairman of Reigate Tories said that Sir George's decision "is an act of betrayal which I very much regret. He has effectively disenfranchised all the thousands of people who voted for him."

Major-General Steele said that in his *Sunday Times*

article yesterday, justifying his decision, Sir George had made "a scurrilous and unwarranted attack" on the Prime Minister and had shown "gross disloyalty".

Major-General Steele said that Sir George would have remained the Tory candidate if, after the initial attempt to deselect him last June, he had kept his head down. "But then, on the issue of Europe and a single currency, he made the remark about Mr Major being Mr Clarke's ventriloquist's dummy, and I think that should be on his gravestone."

He said that he was nevertheless surprised by Sir George's decision to leave the fold. "He was always a

Maths A level to be replaced by modular courses

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THE traditional mathematics A level, taken entirely by final examination, is to disappear within three years and be replaced by "easier" modular courses.

Academics yesterday said that standards of higher level mathematics would be threatened by the move, which is designed to attract more students to stay on for A level.

There has been a huge increase in demand for modular courses, where sections roughly equivalent to a term's work are examined as they are completed, and retakes of each segment are allowed.

Their popularity has led the three A level examination boards to prepare all their A level mathematics courses in pass-as-you-go form following the next change of syllabus in 2000.

The disclosure comes despite fears about the rigour of modular examinations, which led Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, to limit the number of retakes to one per unit.

The only major academic study of the new-style courses found that pupils of the same ability consistently scored a grade higher at modular than on the traditional "linear" syllabus.

Dr John Marks, a member of the board of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, said he would call for an urgent review to ensure schools would still have a separate traditional syllabus. "I will pursue this because I think this is a worrying de-

velopment and a trend which I suspect is not just limited to mathematics," Dr Marks said.

"It was the traditional linear course which set the standard of A level and there has been a lot of concern that the modular course is 'easier', which is one of the reasons why SCAA has been trying to revise the rules for modular courses."

A spokeswoman for the authority, which polices all the courses set for public examination, said: "It will still be possible for students to take all papers at the end of the course, if they choose, so the linear option will remain."

But Dr Marks said this would not create a coherent two-year course. "It is easier to do a modular A level because you have a second bite of the cherry and you do it in bits. You are not getting an overview of students' capacity in the subject totally."

Supporters of modular courses said they helped maintain standards because they motivated students to work consistently for the whole two years.

Labour would abolish national primary school performance tables but require education authorities to publish them locally, David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary said yesterday.

The figures would also have to be published four months earlier than the Government's tables, due out tomorrow, so that they would be in time for parents to use them to choose schools.

Parents pay to prevent school cuts

Families have volunteered to donate £150 a year to avoid staff cuts at a leading state school. The grant-maintained Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, was sixth among state schools for A-level results last year, but says it has lost £425,000 in government grants since 1993. David Levin, headmaster of the 1,200-pupil boys' school, said that the initiative for the donations came from parents anxious to maintain standards.

Herald service

The 193 passengers and seamen who died in the *Herald of Free Enterprise* disaster 10 years ago were remembered at a service in St Mary's church, Dover, yesterday. More than 400 members of bereaved families, survivors, shipmates, rescue workers, counsellors and friends attended the service, conducted by the Rev Graham Batten.

Ferry collision

Cross Channel services were disrupted last night after a catamaran carrying 206 passengers collided with a stationary ferry in fog at Ramsgate harbour, Kent. A child received slight ankle injuries and there was some damage to both vessels, owned by Holyman Sally Ferries. Services today are unlikely to be affected.

Council attack

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, is considering sending a "hit squad" of education experts into Calderdale council in west Yorkshire. The local authority, responsible for the controversial Ridings School in Halifax, will today be condemned for its weak leadership in a report by school inspectors.

Work for bomber

The IRA bomber serving a life sentence for the murder of Earl Mountbatten has been allowed out to work on building sites around Dublin. Tommy McMahon, 48, returns to Mountjoy prison in the evening. Irish Government sources emphasised that McMahon, who was sentenced in 1979, would not be granted full release.

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Girl gangs rivalling boys for violence

By IAN MURRAY

ORGANISED groups of violent girls are starting to rival tough boys in brutality and crime, according to a survey of life in some of the more dangerous all-female gangs in Britain.

The report finds that female violence is no longer an inner-city phenomenon, but increasingly involves daughters of affluent suburban families who reject the role

they believe society expects of them. Typical of these middle-class gangs are the Birches With Attitude, in Maida Vale, west London. Their leader, Rowena, 17, was expelled from her private school after stubbing out cigarettes on the face of a girl she thought was prettier.

"You've got to put a stop to another girl who always gets success with boys. You do damage to their faces, go for the looks," she told the author of the survey, Lisa

Brinkworth, who has spent two years mingling with girl gangs to collect material for a film. He report is published in *Harpers & Queen*.

The growth of girl gangs has come with a rise in the amount of violence initiated by women. Women are now responsible for 12 per cent of domestic violence and Home Office statistics show that violent crimes by females have increased by 250 per cent since 1973.

I have a
acknow
debt to F



Times book rev
a redemptive

Top guns fight

Top guns fight

Top guns fight

Top guns fight

Top guns fight

It is in the nature of literature that books may derive from or be influenced by others, Swift says

I have always acknowledged debt to Faulkner

JOHN FROW plainly does not like my novel. He suggests it is "pointless and flabby". I would be a sad writer if I could not live with the fact that some people do not like my book but, happily, many people do like it and many a critique of *Last Orders* has been written and many a personal letter sent to me by those who like it deeply. The point about the debt to *As I Lay Dying* is not new. It was made prominently in one of the first reviews of *Last Orders*, in *The Times* (January 18, 1996), which praised my novel for how it drew on Faulkner and also, emphatically, for its intrinsic merit. It has been made in other reviews and put to me in interviews and at public events. I have never pretended the connection is not there.

But the great number of reviews and commentaries which do not mention Faulkner suggest that the connection is hardly the nub of my book. Indeed, other writers are mentioned: Chaucer, for example, because my novel involves a group of characters journeying from London through Kent; T.S. Eliot, because the destination is Margate and Eliot has some lines about Margate. The first echo I was conscious of, the second never occurred to me. But is one supposed not to write about travellers in Kent because of Chaucer, or about Margate because of Eliot? It is in the nature of literature that books may derive from or be influenced by others. Equally,

Graham Swift responds to criticism that he borrowed from William Faulkner's novel, *As I Lay Dying*, for his book, *Last Orders*



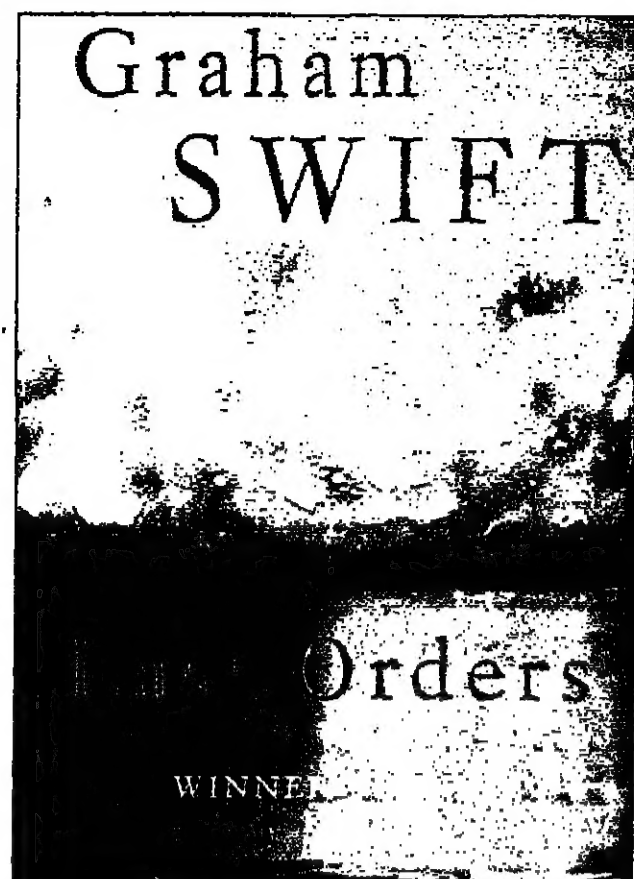
Swift novel is different

there are certain things for which there is no literary patent or monopoly. How do you write about a group of travellers on what is effectively a sort of pilgrimage, without evoking Chaucer? How do you write a story in which the living deal intimately with the remains of the dead and not evoke Faulkner's classic? Some stories are themselves so basic, so perennial, so likely to involve us all, that they are told and need to be told many times. The question is: how does each telling offer up its own vision and create its inherent world? The carrying — handling and mishandling — of a jar of ashes offers very different narrative possibilities and a quite different range

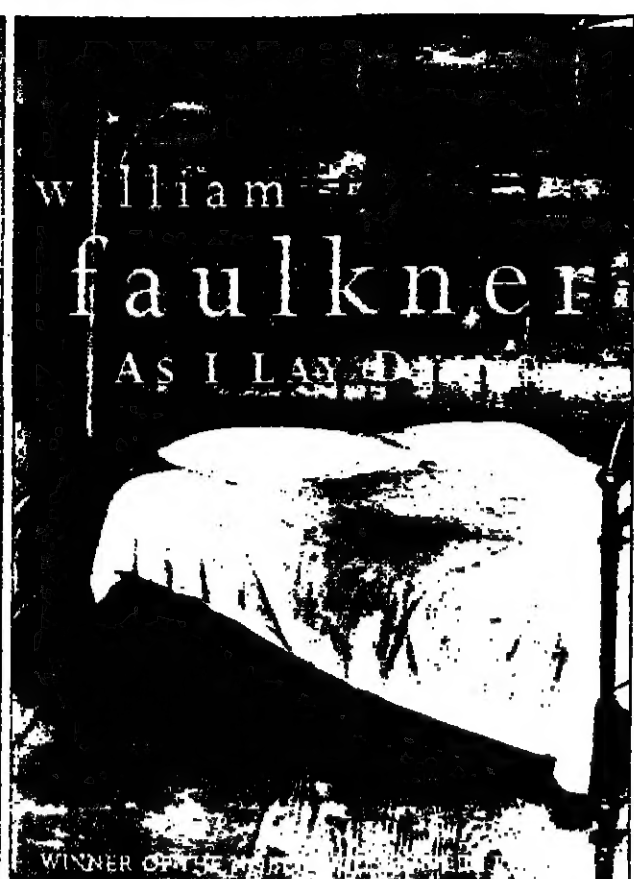
of scenes from a rotting corpse on a lumbering wagon. As people keep reminding me, it is a much more common actual situation. Bermondsey and Kent are not Mississippi. London English is not Mississippi English. Where in Faulkner are my butchers, undertakers and second-hand car dealers? Where is the extensive reanimation of the dead person so that he becomes as much as active presence as the living ones, and where is the pattern of chapters detailing the manner and peculiar solicitations of his death? Where in Faulkner is the world, the memory, the lore of my generation of characters whose experience includes on the one hand the bombing of London and war service in North Africa, and on the other the paraphernalia of pubs, racecourses, betting shops and camper-vans, or that whole sentimental-cum-tawdry-cum-atavistic mythology of the English seaside?

Not addressing such things, Mr Frow makes much of certain technical similarities, without reflecting that they are indeed technical or incidental. That I use, like Faulkner, alternating first-person narratives: well, I have done this before in another novel, and it is not such a peculiar literary method — the shifting point of view — that it should not be open to all. That I have a chapter ascribed to the dead person: its voice, in fact, is that of the dead person's father, and the dead person anyway is given plenty of opportunity to speak elsewhere. That I have a chapter consisting of numbered points: this is a list of a gambler's guiding rules and so is properly set out as a list. That I include, like Faulkner, a chapter of just one line — two words in my case, five in Faulkner's: heaven forbid that only one writer should be allowed a one-line chapter.

But here Mr Frow gets contradictory, saying that my one-line chapter "can't stand the comparison" to Faulkner and that Faulkner's chapter, "My mother is a fish", has a cosmic quality whereas my chapter... well, it's just one man calling three other men "Old buggers". Am I being ticked off here for not being like Faulkner? For not being cosmic? Could it not be that my "old buggers" has a different function in a different narrative and belongs to a different fictional texture? But this is exactly the case. My novel can, understandably, be compared to Faulkner's but does not stand comparison to it. It's a different book.



Swift's *Last Orders* and Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*: "The point about the debt is not new," says Swift



Author answers critic

Continued from page 1
Orders, in its plot and formal structure, is almost identical to that novel, without acknowledgement and without even, as far as I can see, the kind of knowing nod towards the earlier novel that would have made this acceptable. These are tricky issues, but the borrowing (if that's the right word) is substantial."

Carmen Callil, the writer and founder of Virago, who chaired last year's panel of Booker judges, dismissed the

argument. She said: "People steal from each other all the time. He couldn't have chosen a better person to be influenced by in my view. I am currently writing a book about the 200 best English novels since 1950 and I am definitely going to include it among them."

Support also came from Malcolm Bradbury, the novelist and Emeritus Professor

Literature is filled with borrowed tales.

Both books tell how the family and friends of a recently deceased character take the remains on a journey.

In Faulkner, a body is moved across the country for burial in Jackson County, Mississippi. In Swift's book, the ashes of a butcher are taken from Bermondsey, south London, to be scattered on the sea at Margate. Some chapters in both books are only a word or two long.

Writer bred on sound and fury of Deep South

By IAN MURRAY

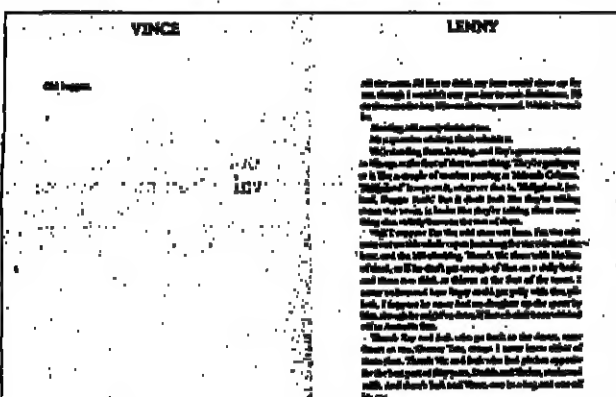
WILLIAM FAULKNER (1897-1962) was Mississippi born and bred, proud of his southern heritage and of his great-grandfather, who served with distinction in the American Civil War. He became best known for a cycle of books that developed the history of the Deep South as a fable of human destiny everywhere.

He was a desultory university student, more interested in reading Omar Khayyam than regimented study. He joined the RAF in the First World War and was shot down twice. Returning to Mississippi and university, he attended intermittently for two years and never graduated.

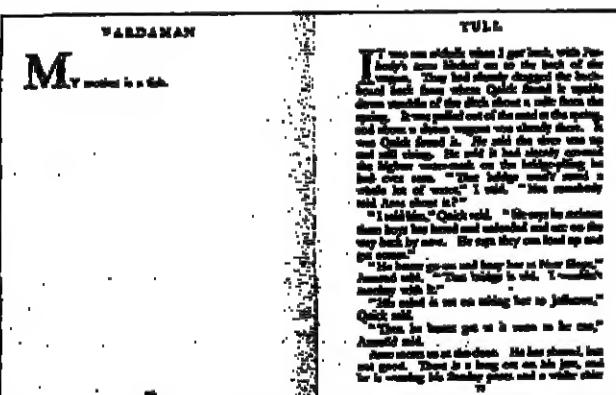
His first published work was a poem in a New Orleans magazine, *The Sound and the Fury*, his first great novel, written in a stream-of-consciousness style, was published in 1929. It was panned by the critics.

Unable to live by writing alone, he took a job as night superintendent of a power plant and there, with an upturned wheelbarrow for a desk, wrote *As I Lay Dying* (1930). Other novels included *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Intruder in the Dust*. He went to Hollywood and wrote screenplays, including *The Big Sleep*. Faulkner was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.

SIMILAR, BUT DIFFERENT



Swift says his critic becomes contradictory when comparing his one-line chapter, above, with Faulkner's



Times book reviewer hailed a 'redemptive adaptation'

CLAIRE MESSUD, who reviewed *Last Orders* for *The Times* last year, pointed out Swift's debt to Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, and considered the former an adaptation. Here are extracts.

"Few novels of his century have taken on the weight of modern myth, but William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is one of them, a tortuous masterpiece about the Bundren family's journey to bury their mother.

"In the hands of an uncertain talent, any reworking of this narrative — and particularly a contemporary, British reworking — would be folly, an invitation to bathos; but Graham Swift's new novel, *Last Orders*, is a triumphant, and ultimately redemptive, adaptation of Faulkner's classic. It, too, is the tale of a

journey to a burial, and in its telling Swift has taken up Faulkner's device of alternating named monologues. The novel is punctuated with more specific debts to its predecessor, both in form and in detail:



Messud: "Swift's novel a triumphant adaptation"

and yet *Last Orders* is not mere pastiche. A resonant work of art in its own right, it confirms its author as one of his generation's finest, with an imagination of rare immediacy and vitality.

"As in *As I Lay Dying*, the funeral trip teases to the surface the roiling resentments and agonies of years; but Swift, in *Last Orders*, allows for reconciliation, and even for hope. And while Faulkner's talent was to write himself into each of his characters, to insert improbable, magnificent passages of articulation into the minds of his creations, Swift has chosen to efface his writerliness almost entirely from this book: there is a deceptive simplicity in the novel's diction, a captivating authenticity in the voices it projects."

Top guns fight for world title

By HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

FIGHTER pilots from the world's air forces are to compete in a series of virtual reality dogfights to discover who is the real "top gun". Watched by up to 170,000 spectators, their every twist and turn will be displayed on giant screens as they try to evade attack.

The competition will take place during the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in July. It is expected

least ten countries including Britain and some from Europe, the former Soviet bloc and North America.

The event, sponsored by the Swiss watchmakers Breitling, will take place over three days of heats, semi-finals and finals, and spectators will be encouraged to cheer on their own favourite. Each pilot will wear a virtual reality helmet linked to a computer and display simulator which will display different and challenging cloud formations and ground conditions. The simulator has

based on the key components of all the world's leading fighter aircraft.

Clive Elliott, of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, which hopes to receive up to £500,000 from the event, said that it would have been unfair to have one particular aircraft on the simulator. Pilots will have to learn how to handle a "generic" jet for the contest.

The winner, who will have seen off challengers in at least 20 aerial shoot-outs, will be given a challenge cup and the title of Champion Fighter Pilot



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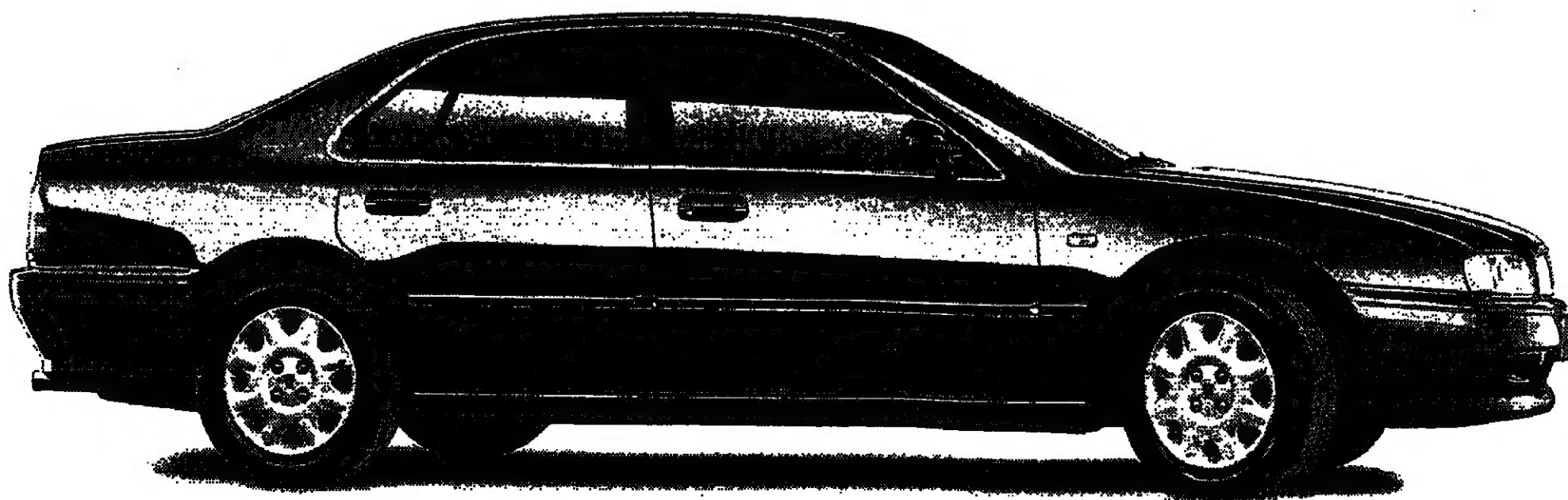
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Inventor says reversed keyboard is easy: 'Within a day I was reading Mozart backwards'

Musician designs piano for players left in the lurch

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A PIANIST is designing a piano for left-handed musicians. Christopher Seed hopes to build an instrument in which everything, including the keyboard, is reversed to allow a left-handed pianist's stronger hand to play melodies scored for the right hand. The left hand, so often relegated to the accompanying chords and subservient to the melody being played by the right hand, would come into its own with the instrument. Mr Seed plans a complete mirror-image of an early 19th-century fortepiano: the highest notes will be on the left and the lowest ones will be found on the right. The pedals will be reversed and, if playing with an orchestra, the soloist will be facing the other side, to ensure that his left hand and the lid are facing the right way.

Musical scores do not have to be rewritten because the treble clef will be played with the left hand. The fingering even remains the same.

Mr Seed, who is left-handed, proved that it could work by programming his electronic keyboard. "I realised how easy it is to adapt, I thought it would take years to retrain, but within a day, I was reading Mozart backwards. It improved my playing and seemed so natural," Mr Seed, 32, has given recitals in London at the Wigmore Hall, and St John's, Smith Square. He teaches at Winchester College.

In most piano repertoires, he explained, the proportion of right-hand notes to left-hand ones was unbalanced. He has long avoided Chopin and Mozart for that reason. He said

his design could also be useful for right-handed players who wanted to strengthen their left hand.

Peter Dickinson, professor of music at Goldsmiths college, University of London, said the idea was "revolutionary". He said music was generally "written with the right hand dominant", apart from ragtime and certain kinds of jazz.

Stanley Sadie, editor of *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, said assessing which composers and performers had been left-handed was difficult: many may have suppressed their natural preference because being left-handed was long considered sinister. But C.P.E. Bach was a likely candidate, judging by an oblique reference by his father, J.S. Bach, to his son



Christopher Seed at an ordinary piano. His design for left-handers is based on a mirror-image of the fortepiano

having to strengthen his right hand. The French composer Ravel would have been captivated by Mr Seed's idea. He wrote an entire piano concerto for the left hand. It was composed for Paul Wingen-

stein, the Austrian pianist who lost his right arm in the First World War and was the brother of the philosopher. Ravel, however, was so disgusted by the pianist's alterations that he asked him never

to perform the concerto again. Although Mr Seed has located someone who could design the piano, Poletti & Tuinman Fortepiano makers of Holland, he needs to raise £28,000, and is seeking a

sponsor. Initially, he is focusing on recreating a 19th-century fortepiano, partly because it is cheaper than a modern piano.

Leading article, page 21

Children keep mum in seeking sex advice

By A STAFF REPORTER

PARENTS are still the main source of information about sex for most children, according to a study published yesterday. They were responsible for the sex education of almost half of girls and about a third of boys.

The study of 9 to 12-year-olds by the Schools Health Education Unit at Exeter University found that between 12.1 per cent and 18.3 per cent learnt most about sex from teachers. About two thirds said parents should be the main source and a fifth teachers.

About 40 per cent of children in the younger age groups had talked to their parents about the threat of Aids. One in four 11 and 12-year-olds had tried smoking and 3 per cent actually smoked. But more than four out of five said they would never take up the habit.

About a quarter of the boys and 15 per cent of the girls questioned claimed to have drunk alcohol during the previous week. More than half had discussed illegal drugs with their parents.

Nature defied by those who force someone's hand

By DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

GEORGE VI, admired for his bravery and steadfastness, might in some cultures not have been allowed to accede to the throne and could even have been put down in childhood, like a deformed puppy. This is because he was left-handed, which in certain parts of the world has been considered a mark of the Devil. The word sinister is derived from the Latin for left. Even in some contemporary cultures, a person who shows a preference to use the left hand as the principal hand is considered abnormal, and even evil.

Ten per cent of healthy people have an inclination to use their left hand or are equally agile with both. Before puberty it is possible to teach many left-handed children to be right-handed. In doing so, however, the teacher is defying nature because there are differences in the brain of right and left-handed people. The speech centre is in the right hemisphere in the brain of left-handed people, rather than in the left as with the right-handed, and the balance of the distribution of

the large nerve tracks within the brain is correspondingly different.

It is widely assumed that attempting to teach a naturally left-handed child to be right-handed could upset the delicate balance of the central nervous system, that thereafter they could display complex psychological problems or trouble with the routine control of facial muscles or the movements of limbs.

If George VI did stammer because there was a futile attempt to rid him of his left-handedness, it was probably because of the pressure rather than physical changes in his neurological anatomy. The pressure might also have accounted for the famed sudden, but short-lived, bursts of regal temper. George VI was excellent at playing tennis. A well-known tennis player whose tantrums amused the Centre Court for years was John McEnroe, who is also left-handed.

Statistically the left-handed are fractionally more likely to be good athletes and good mathematicians. They are, however, more likely to suffer from epilepsy and congenital heart disease.

There is evidence that left-handedness is inherited and the genetic defect which causes the epilepsy or heart disease may also influence left-handedness.

The greatest British expert on research into handedness died a few years ago at a comparatively young age, illustrating another disadvantage of being left-handed: there is a statistical tendency, no more than that, for left-handed people to die younger than the right-handed.



McEnroe: excelled with his left hand

Businesses overtake universities on research

By NIGEL HAWKES

SOME companies are publishing more academic papers than a medium-sized university, a study has shown.

ICI published more than 4,600 papers from 1981 to 1994, while SmithKline Beecham, Wellcome and AEA Technology each published more than 2,000. A third of British universities published fewer than 2,000 papers in the same period, according to the study by the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University.

The report, *The Changing Shape of British Industrial Research*, was compiled by Diana Hicks and J. Sylvan Katz using data from scientific journals. They conclude that industrial research is contributing substantially to the science base and has shown itself to be "dynamic, diverse and adaptive". Drug and chemical companies produce the most papers, with biotechnology firms gaining prominence.

The report says that the quality of the papers published by industry is generally high, measured by the number of times they are cited by other researchers.

FM licence for station that itched to get on air

By ALEXANDRA FREAN

A COMMUNITY radio station operated by volunteers in a disused cobbler's workshop has become the smallest broadcaster to receive a full commercial radio licence.

Lochbroom FM, which two years ago launched an information service on the movements of midge swarms, is based in Ullapool, Highland. It had temporary broadcasting licences which enabled it to go on air for a few weeks only, but has now won an eight-year franchise from the Radio Authority.

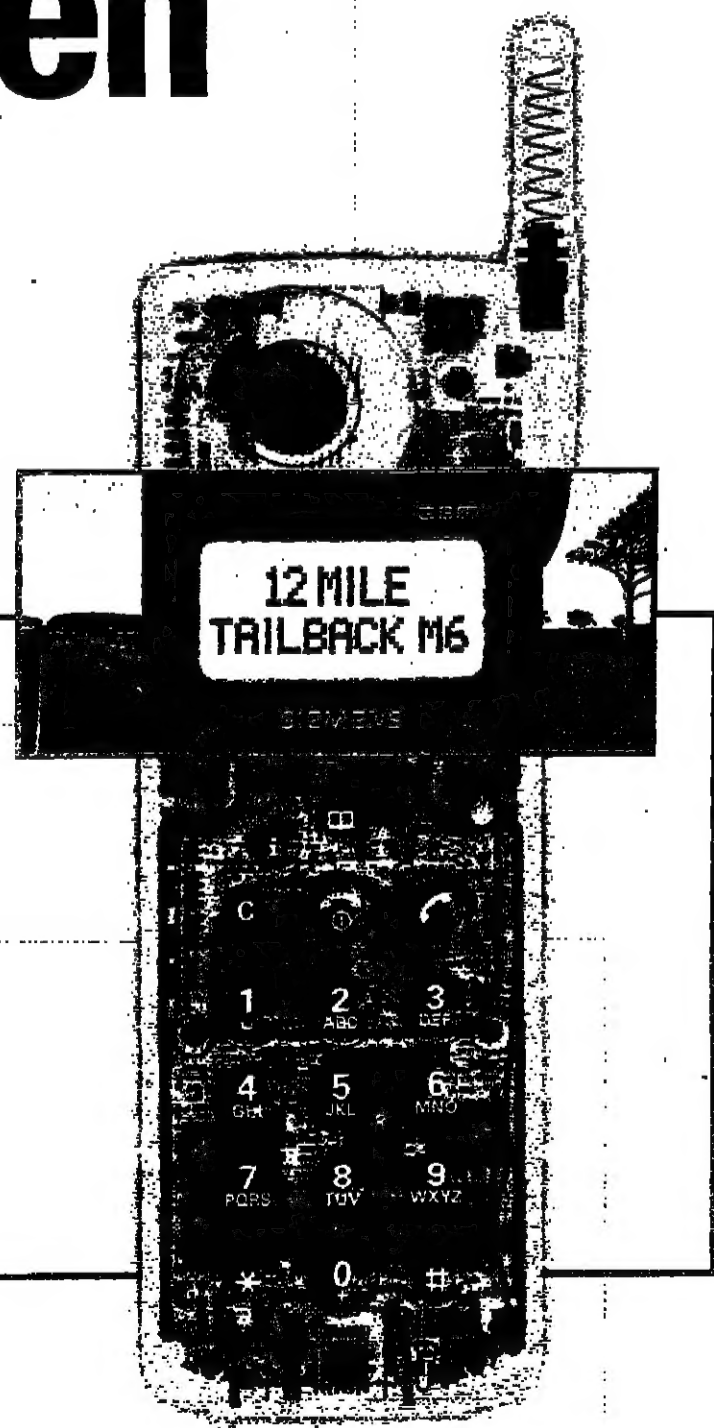
Kenneth MacDonald, an accountant who helped to set up the station, said: "Lochbroom FM has made a real difference to the community. It has become a talking point in the village and in the pubs."

The station hopes to raise the £50,000 a year it needs to survive from advertising and sponsorship from tradesmen and businesses. It was recently awarded a £45,000 National Lottery grant which will enable it to build a headquarters to replace the tin shack it rented from a cobbler.

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BALLOT '97

THE TIMES GUIDE TO ELECTION ISSUES

8. Scotland

Home rule battle will focus the voters' minds

IN THE forthcoming election, like the wars that brought Britain into being, the sharpest fighting between the Government and its opponents will be in Scotland.

The apparent convergence of Labour and the Tories on the centre ground in economics, welfare and crime has been accompanied by a far more confrontational stance on the constitution. Labour and its Liberal Democrat allies argue that a Scottish assembly marks the modernisation of Britain, and the most effective bulwark against separatist demands. The Tories maintain that setting up a parliament in Edinburgh would see an acid eat away at the Union. The Scottish nationalists, with a handful of MPs but twice the Tories' standing in the polls, breathe down the other parties' necks and argue

that only independence in Europe can provide Scotland with the freedom that Sir William Wallace fought for and the larger Union on which prosperity depends.

Labour holds 49 of Scotland's 72 seats, the Tories ten, the Liberal Democrats nine and the Scottish National Party four. The ratings in the last Scotland-wide opinion poll by System Three for *The Herald* confirm Labour's ascendancy with the party at 46 per cent. The SNP, now Scotland's second party, is on 26 per cent, the Tories 16 and the Liberal Democrats ten.

It is from the dry, unchanging arithmetic of Labour's electoral advantage in Scotland that the passion of the coming political battle springs. While the numbers voting Tory across the UK have stayed steady in every general

election from 1979 to 1992 Scotland has consistently sent a Labour majority to Westminster. Abstract annoyance at this apparent imbalance turned into concrete anger in the late 1980s when Margaret Thatcher's government introduced the poll tax in Scotland a year before the rest of Britain.

The indignation of Labour voters at Tory policies, the frustration of activists denied power while enjoying hegemony, and a fear of the SNP, which might attract the frustrated with fundamentalism, have combined to drive the party towards a radical plan for a separate parliament. Labour has worked with the Liberal Democrats in the Constitutional Convention since 1988 to agree a blueprint. The assembly would be elected by proportional representation with

THE POLITICS

equal numbers of men and women. It would control most domestic policy and have the power to vary income tax by 3p in the pound.

That last commitment became seen as the parliament's Achilles' heel. The Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, led a vigorous campaign against what he styled "the tartan tax". Labour, anxious to dispel the impression that all its instincts were to raise tax, and determined to give constitutional reform a more pronounced democratic underpinning, refined its policy last year.

Until last summer Labour believed that victory at the general election would be a sufficient mandate to legislate for a Scottish

parliament. Now the party is committed to a referendum with two questions, inviting Scots to support the principle of a parliament and asking whether it should have tax-varying powers. The policy change, announced by the Shadow Scottish Secretary, George Robertson, caused consternation. It was seen as the work of Labour's London leadership and contrary to the spirit of devolving power.

The SNP made hay with Labour's policy change, arguing that the party could not be trusted to deliver devolution with a London leadership prepared to dilute previous positions. The Tories depicted Labour's revision as a retreat, evidence of the fundamental unsoundness and instability of the party's plans.

However, whatever propaganda advantages the parties saw, the poll figures still suggest support, albeit frayed, for Labour's plans. Last March, before the policy change, support for the broad devolution package was 51 per cent, the Tory preference of the status quo 21 per cent and the SNP option of independence in Europe 25 per cent. In November of last year, support for devolution was 44 per cent, the status quo 18 per cent and independence 34 per cent. Labour can also take some heart from a poll for STV last December which suggests that 73 per cent of Scots would say yes to Labour's assembly in a referendum and 59 per cent would support giving it tax-raising powers.

Labour's electoral resilience should see the majority of Scottish MPs who are returned committed to devolution. How effectively they deliver could be a different matter. Before the devolution referendum in March 1979 huge support for Labour's assembly was recorded in the polls. When the vote took place, after a campaign had emphasised the problems as well as the promises, only 33 per cent of Scots voted yes and 32 per cent no.

Because of a hurdle erected by the Labour backbencher George Cunningham, 40 per cent of those eligible had to vote yes before an assembly could be set up. The third who abstained as good as said no. Next time round apathy may be less, and while Labour may be able to ensure Scotland says yes to an assembly it is an altogether different question getting Scots to say yes to paying extra taxes.

Leading article, page 21

Tories have presided over rise in prosperity

STANDS Scotland where it did? Any exiled Macduff who returned this year after 18 away would find a country greatly changed by four Tory terms.

Scotland's contours are different from England's. Water remains in public hands, only a handful of schools have ever applied for grant-maintained status and a socialist sits for Morningside. The Thatcherite revolution, like the Flying Scotsman, lost a little momentum as it crossed the border. But to appreciate the scale of change it is important to realise how much more statist the Scotland of the 1970s was than the England of the same period.

In 1979 more than 60 per cent of Scots lived in council houses, the highest proportion in Europe outside the Warsaw Pact. A third of the working population were employed in the public sector and many others in industries such as heavy engineering depended on government contracts. The number of children educated outside the state sector was below the UK average, and even that figure was inflated by the cultural curiosity of a concentration of private schools in Edinburgh — Jean Brodie was more than myth.

When the Tories won the 1979 election they were, initially, in no mood for rough stuff. The man who Margaret Thatcher wanted to make Scottish Secretary, the best hope for radicalism, Teddy Taylor, lost his seat in Cathcart in 1979. The man who got the job, "Gentleman" George Younger, was a different kind of Tory. The MP for Ayr, now Lord Younger of Prestwick, sought to take the rough edges off Thatcherism for his Scottish audience.

When nationalised industry bosses tried to rationalise their Scottish operations to save the taxpayer's money, Mr Younger stood firm for his countrymen's jobs. On more than one occasion when the Ravenscroft steelworks were threatened with closure, he hinted that he could resign. He kept

THE RECORD

his job and so, for a while, did the steelmen. But while Mr Younger could insulate some Scottish industries from the chill winds of the Eighties, the recession still hit Scotland badly. Like Tyneside and South Wales, Scotland depended disproportionately for jobs on heavy industry. The aluminium smelter in Invergordon, Chrysler plant at Linwood and steel mill at Gartcosh all closed during Mr Younger's period in office.

Nevertheless, he did preside over reforms that Scots embraced. The sale of council houses was bitterly opposed by Labour local authorities but has contributed to Scotland's current level of 58 per cent home ownership. Since 1979, 325,000 tenants have bought their council homes. Mr Younger also set out to replace dying industries with sunrise enterprises.

Since 1981, more than £5 billion has been invested in Scotland from abroad — that has been responsible for some 83,000 jobs. Although Scotland has only 10 per cent of the UK population, it has attracted between 20 and 25 per cent of the jobs created by inward investment. Much of that has been in the Central Belt denuded of jobs by the decline of traditional industries — particularly notable has been the creation of a thriving electronics sector. More than 30 per cent of Europe's personal computers are made in Scotland.

Opposition parties have welcomed the new jobs but lamented the loss of indigenous control of Scottish industry. They have worried about the resilience of Scotland's "branch-line" economy, pointing to the ease with which multi-nationals can relocate and the takeover of Scottish firms such as Distillers by companies that move headquarters out of Scotland.

George Younger was succeeded as Scottish Secretary in 1986 by Malcolm Rifkind. With the seals of office, Mr



Sir William Wallace (c.1272-1306), champion of Scottish independence. He was hanged, drawn and quartered in London

Younger also handed over the poisoned chalice of the poll tax, but even before its effects were felt, the Tories were in trouble in Scotland. At the 1987 election, while Mrs Thatcher cruised to a landslide, the complement of Scots Tory MPs was cut from 21 to ten.

Mr Rifkind, although a natural One Nation Tory and out of sympathy with much of the Thatcher project, was forced to conclude that shielding Scotland from full-force Thatcherism had not appeared to work. Perhaps some radical medicine might be in order. He was encouraged in this by one of his new ministers, Michael Forsyth, MP for Stirling, whose reforming zeal at health and education was exceeded only by his ability to put his boss's back up.

Mr Forsyth's reforms and Mr Rifkind's activism in other areas, notably housing, heritage and the Highlands, did not, however, appear to bring popularity. All their reforms were, inevitably, overshadowed by the poll tax. It allowed both Labour and nationalist politicians easy targets. The flat-rate levy offended against Scotland's egalitarian instincts and its early introduction was presented as a slap in the face for a nation audacious enough

not to vote Tory. The SNP, by championing a non-payment strategy, succeeded in attracting particular attention.

Eventually, opposition to the tax in England brought it down, and Mrs Thatcher with it. Her successor moved Mr Rifkind from a Scottish Office post to a senior role in the Home Office.

Mr Lang provided a steady hand and a sharper message on the constitution. Early in his term of office Scottish pride was dealt a devastating blow when privatised British Steel closed the Ravenscroft steelworks. Although at the time that Ravenscroft closed more people were employed by the Loch Ness monster tourist trade, its disappearance was depicted as a symbol of Scotland's de-industrialisation. The new jobs in Silicon Glen were seen as poor recompense by many Scots.

Mr Lang favoured an attacking defence and in defiance of conventional wisdom but in tune with his leader's instincts, he talked up the "Scottish Question". Frightening voters with the potential consequences of change saw the Tories record a tiny increase in their vote and win two extra seats in 1992.

Against expectations of a wipeout, it looked like a formidable recovery.

Mr Lang set in train some small reforms to the constitution, to assuage nationalist feeling, such as bringing the Scottish Grand Committee, a scrutiny body on which all 72 Scots MPs sit, closer to the people. Whatever benefits the Tories gained from this were, however, undermined by the reform of local government that gave Scotland unitary councils. The blatant way in which potentially Tory-voting areas were turned into local authority enclaves gave rise to accusations of gerrymandering and raised new questions of accountability.

Since 1995 Scotland has been governed by Mr Forsyth. Mr Rifkind's junior returned to a near-uniformly hostile reception but has confounded critics by an activist posture that marries the radicalism of before with a determined effort to cloak Toryism in tartan.

Although Mr Forsyth has been implacable in his opposition to major constitutional change he has genuflected to Scottish sensibilities with a demotic style and grand gestures such as the repatriation of the Stone of Destiny. He has made the fight against drugs a priority by launching an all-

party campaign to deal with a problem which scars many of the anonymous housing schemes which ring Scotland's major cities. He has also concentrated on crime, introducing mandatory drug-testing in prisons, putting more police on patrol, toughening community sentences and extending the use of closed circuit television. Mr Forsyth presided over a 5 per cent drop in crime figures in 1995, the fourth successive year in which a fall was recorded.

The Scotland of Michael Forsyth has lost the traditional industries that sustained the social solidarity of the 1970s but it has a range of new enterprises that make it the UK's fourth richest region. It has a public sector more efficient but less certain of its status, a population better housed and wealthier but more estranged from their rulers.

It has a cultural self-confidence manifested in a thriving broadcasting and literary sector as well as a revived and generously funded Gaelic-speaking minority. It is a country that has been made prosperous enough by the Tories and the Union to consider a different future.

Next week: Transport

THE POLITICIANS

MICHAEL FORSYTH

Secretary of State

Age: 42

Past: entered Commons in 1983 as hard-right graduate of St Andrews and Westminster Council. Joined Government only after Tories reduced to ten men in Scotland in 1987. A radical junior minister and abrasive Scottish party chairman, he mellowed post-92 as minister at Employment and Home Office before joining Cabinet in 1995.

Present: unyielding Unionist and hyperactive campaigner, still on party's



Right, but colleagues suspect his efforts have not improved Tories' standing. Future: bleak — defending a 703 majority.

GEORGE ROBERTSON

Shadow Secretary of State

Age: 50

Past: traditional fixer and Dundee graduate. Beat the nationalists to win 1978 Hamilton by-election and has been their implacable enemy since. Close to Hattersley-Dewar right-wing pro-Europe faction, which delayed his entry to the Shadow Cabinet until 1993.

Present: early promise has given rise to disappointment. Fumbled referendum announcement and has presided over recent civil war within Labour ranks. But as



lifelong rightwinger has no problems with Blairism. Future: referendum campaign and legislation will be headaches.

ALEX SALMOND

Leader, SNP

Age: 42

Past: Forsyth's contemporary at St Andrews; a student socialist who argued himself into nationalism. Former government economist who packs rhetorical punch. On left of party, elected for Banff and Buchan in 1987; party leader since 1990.

Present: most intellectually impressive politician Scottish nationalism has produced. Kept SNP in second place to Labour for most of this Parliament.



Future: no credible rival for the leadership. A botched devolution scheme could be exploited by him to argue for greater autonomy.

JIM WALLACE

Leader, Scottish Lib Dems

Age: 42

Past: Cambridge and Edinburgh-educated advocate who inherited Jo Grimond's Orkney and Shetland seat in 1983. Traditional Scots rural Liberal and dedicated home ruler who replaced exhausted Malcolm Bruce as Scottish Lib leader in 1992.

Present: fell out with Labour over referendum but breach now repaired. Low Commons profile but well-thought-of performance on the ground in Scotland.

Future: several Scots Lib



Dem seats look vulnerable, but PR in a Scottish parliament should ensure that the party has a place in future coalition administrations.

CONSERVATIVES



A Scottish parliament? No. Scotland does very well out of the Westminster Parliament with 72 seats, rather than the 54 it is entitled to on population grounds. Devolution would lead to a questioning of Scotland's representation at Westminster and the Scottish Secretary's seat in the Cabinet, not to mention setting up a rival legislature that separatists could hijack.

Without an assembly how do you defend Scottish interests? Scotland's special needs are catered for by the Secretary of State in the Cabinet, a devolved administration, its distinctive legal and educational systems, the many autonomous bodies such as Scottish Enterprise which control Scottish life, and the Scottish Grand Committee. Moreover, by keeping Scotland out of the social chapter Scottish business enjoys genuine independence.

Is there anything more you can offer? Devolution down to the individual. Moves to give parents greater power over schools and patients, through GP fundholders, over health-care. Also the transfer of land in the Highlands to individuals gives crofters their own "wee bit, hill and glen".

Can we expect any constitutional change? The situation is always under review and Westminster is flexible but nothing will be contemplated that would weaken the Union.

LABOUR



A Scottish parliament? Yes, with members elected by AMS system, which keeps constituencies but ensures proportionality by topping up party numbers from lists. Gender equality would be guaranteed. Parliament would cover all domestic policy areas except macro-economics and social security, with power to vary taxes by 3p in the pound.

How would we get there? A Labour victory at the general election then a referendum, before any Bill was produced, asking Scots two questions: do they want a parliament, and should it have tax-raising powers?

What if the Scots said no? Labour would drop the scheme. If they said yes to an assembly but no to taxes then Labour would draft a Bill for such a body. (The proposed Welsh assembly does not have tax-raising powers.)

Who would pay any extra income tax workers or residents in Scotland? Unclear.

Other policies? These would, by and large, be decided by the Scottish parliament but there should be a broader increase in decisions being democratised with local authorities ending competitive tendering and quangos being tamed.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS



A Scottish parliament? Yes, on the same lines as Labour proposes, with gender equality a matter for individual parties not the parliament. The Liberal Democrats would, however, press for federalism now with broadly equivalent assemblies across the UK to prevent other regions feeling left out.

How would we get there? The Liberal Democrats believe that a Commons majority for devolution is mandate enough. A referendum is not necessary when the majority of Scotland's MPs are in favour of reform.

What's wrong with a referendum? A two-question referendum is flawed. The proposed parliament is a finished package worked out between Labour and the Liberal Democrats over years in the Constitutional Convention. Lose the tax-varying powers, and you cripple the parliament before it is up and running.

Who would pay the extra income tax? Residents.

What else would greater self-government entail? Liberal Democrats argue, unlike Labour, that the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster would have to be reduced after an assembly was set up.

SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS



A Scottish parliament? Yes, and it would not be subordinate to Westminster. An independent Scotland would have a written constitution, a Bill of Rights, a modernised relationship with the monarchy, 200 MPs elected by PR and could levy the taxes it wanted in the way Scots wanted.

How would we get there? A majority of SNP MPs elected to Westminster Short of that, an SNP majority or an SNP-led coalition in a devolved assembly could press for greater autonomy.

How could Scotland survive without the block grant from the UK Exchequer? A new tax regime, oil and gas revenues and an end to subsidising the defence procurement and mortgage interest relief, from which England benefits disproportionately, could release revenue.

Would the EU allow an independent Scotland to stay in? It allowed Germany to unite. It is planning to expand to take in far poorer countries.

What would independence achieve? Apart from the dignity of self-government it would enable Scots to be more radical than new Labour would ever allow, with no nuclear deterrent and higher public spending.

هكذا من الاطراف

Ashdown defends his deal with Labour

By Polly Newton, Political Reporter

PADDY Ashdown defended the Liberal Democrats' deal with Labour on constitutional reform yesterday after claims from some activists that it could cost his party votes.

Mr Ashdown told delegates to the Liberal Democrats' spring conference in Cardiff: "We have been able to work and agree with the Labour Party in this one crucial area — despite our different values, our different policies and our different beliefs. Now that may be criticised by some. But it will be a great source of hope for millions in Britain who despair of politicians ever working together for the good of the country." Last week a joint Labour-Liberal Democrat document was published setting out plans for Scottish and Welsh assemblies, a Bill of Rights and reform of the House of Lords.

The prospective parliamentary candidate for Ceredigion and Pembroke North, Dai Davies, who said he did not want the Liberal Democrats to work "hand in hand" with Labour, was later said to have been "carpeted" by his party leader.

Mr Ashdown's insistence that the deal with Labour was a positive achievement was

warmly applauded. One delegate said later: "We hate Labour politically, but most of us realise that there are areas where we can work together."

Mr Ashdown said that the agreement exemplified the Liberal Democrats' "can-do" approach. They wanted "a new style of co-operation in politics".

In the face of the huge challenges that faced Britain, the Conservatives demonstrated a "puny" lack of vision and a "terrifying lack of ambition for our country", he said. As for Labour, "There is a distant, uncashed promise of a 10p tax cut — this year... next year... sometime... never." Labour had adopted the Tories' spending plans and would not be able to tackle the problems faced by the NHS or by schools, he said.

"Our party now carries the torch of conscience and reform. We carry the torch of radicalism in our defence of individual liberties and progressive social policies," Mr Ashdown declared.

He said that the £2 billion which the Liberal Democrats would raise through putting up on the basic rate of income tax would provide a primary school with 250 pupils with an extra £16,000 for books, computers and equipment, and a secondary school with 1,000 pupils with an additional £110,000. There would be 35,000 new jobs in pre-school education as a result of the party's commitment to provide a nursery place for every child from the age of three.

Mr Ashdown said that the Liberal Democrats were the only party promising to increase income taxes on the highest earners — bringing the rate to 50 percent for those on £100,000 a year or more, to take the lowest earners out of the income tax system.



Ashdown addressing delegates yesterday

William Rees-Mogg, page 20

Action man happy to be grandfather

By Polly Newton

THE leader of the Liberal Democrats professed himself "absolutely delighted" yesterday at the prospect of becoming a grandfather, dismissing claims that he feared it would dent his action-man image.

The baby, the first for his daughter, Kate, who lives in France, is due next month. A newspaper report suggested that Mr Ashdown, 56, was keen to keep the event a secret because it would emphasise the fact that he is the oldest of the three main party leaders.

Mr Ashdown's wife, Jane, said yesterday that the suggestion was nonsense and had caused "a lot of hurt". Mrs Ashdown, who had just visited Kate, will go to France after the birth although the baby is expected in the middle of the election campaign.

Mr Ashdown said yesterday: "The baby is due in April, and I am thrilled. He chose not to mention the happy event in his speech to Liberal Democrat delegates at the party's spring conference in Cardiff, although he did make a reference to all the babies that are to be born in Britain this year."

An Ashdown aide said there had been plans to mention the baby in the speech, but they were rejected because of Mr Ashdown's disapproval of politicians using their families in campaigning at every opportunity.

The aide said that Mr Ashdown was greatly looking forward to being a grandfather and had not tried to conceal the fact. "I thought everybody knew about it. He talks about it at almost every meeting."

Spies go on line to brief ministers

By Michael Evans

INTELLIGENCE scoops by British spies are now flashed to special computer terminals around Whitehall.

The security and intelligence services have been linked to government departments by an encrypted electronic messaging system. The development is partly in response to the criticisms levelled at Whitehall and the intelligence agencies by Sir Richard Scott in his report on the arms-to-Iraq inquiry.

Sir Richard detailed shortcomings in how intelligence material was circulated to the appropriate ministries. The software for the UK Intelligence Messaging Network was designed in Britain and has been installed with the use of fibre optics.

The three security and intelligence agencies — MI6, MI5 and GCHQ, the government communications centre at Cheltenham in Gloucestershire — have been linked to the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Computer chips and the social potatoes

By Tim Jones

COMPUTER addicts are being recognised with a new status placing them somewhere between motivated and masochist — but only in a dictionary. The Oxford University Press is to define them in its next edition under the name: mouse potatoes.

The people who sit for hours surfing the global network rather than enjoying a social life will be defined as being seen by many as "having a twilight existence, cut off from reality". Some are also defined by an addiction to "cybersex" on e-mail.

The new Oxford English Dictionary will include scores of computer-speak phrases which are edging their way into common usage. Internet users are "netizens" and "cybermats". There is also "kibo", the web slang for God.

Helen McManners, an OUP spokeswoman, said: "Conch potatoes are a new breed joining yuppies, bimbos, toyboys and others who have earned a place in the English language."

Vicar who defied call to resign preaches on 'wounds'

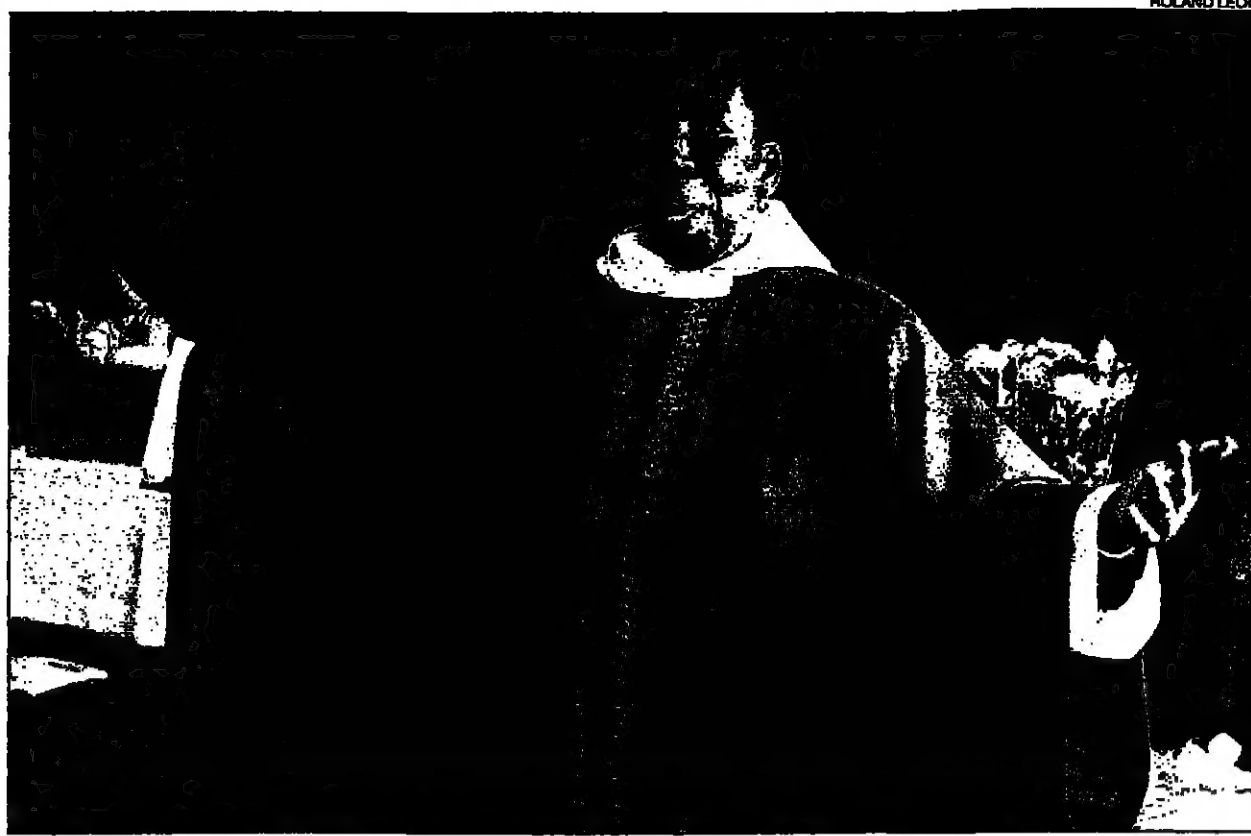
By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

ENGLAND'S first black woman team vicar, the Rev Eve Pitts, preached on with spirit and determination yesterday, one week after her diocesan bishop issued an open letter explaining why he had asked her to resign.

In a service on the Feast of the Transfiguration, she referred to the "wounds" suffered by all present, and told her congregation: "When things are down and you feel as if you want to give up, put yourself in Jesus's place, and say, 'Here I am, do with me as you will'."

Life was not always a straight path, she continued in her sermon delivered in a dilapidated community centre on the Druid's Heath estate, Birmingham, a mile down the road from the 13th-century church of St Nicolas, where she ran the 9.15am family service for two years.

"Sometimes we have to go down into the valleys. This



Eve Pitts preaching to 30 people in a community centre yesterday. "God will heal our wounds," she said

morning, the suffering Messiah reminds us that on the road to suffering. He also received glory. May I reassure you that the glory of God can be in all your hearts. This morning, that suffering Messiah can walk the streets of Druid's Heath."

Maureen and Ray Harvey,

whose son Lee was killed in a roadside attack, and whose funeral was taken by Mrs Pitts, were among the 30 worshippers at the service short of trappings. The Harveys have collected 600 signatures on a petition in support of Mrs Pitts, who was to have taken the wedding

service for their son in June. Mr Harvey said: "She has given us support beyond her pastoral duties. She is the kind of person who gives the Church credibility."

Mrs Pitts has remained silent about what lies behind the pastoral breakdown between her and the Rev Martin

Leigh, the rector of King's Norton team ministry. Mrs Pitts was asked by the Bishop of Birmingham, to resign after she stood up during a communion service at St Nicolas and accused Mr Leigh of using her "as a doormat". She has so far refused to resign.

Doctor with Aids virus faces GMC hearing

By Adrian Lee

ALMOST 6,000 women have contacted helplines since it emerged that a gynaecologist who worked at five hospitals was infected with the Aids virus. Patrick Ngosa, born in Zambia, will face a General Medical Council disciplinary hearing in London today.

He must answer claims that he infected a woman, with whom he allegedly had an affair, with the Aids virus and failed to undergo tests when he knew he was probably HIV positive. By late yesterday afternoon 5,684 calls had been made to two helplines.

Although most accepted they were at little risk, some callers were said to be distraught and offered counselling. Almost 50 women have already undergone Aids tests in the Southend area.

It is understood that the infected woman has subsequently withdrawn her complaint, made several months ago. But the GMC will want to know why the doctor, a married man who worked in obstetrics and gynaecology, did not have a test sooner.

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Parish fights Church's sale of bog

Future of village greens rests on ruling by Lords

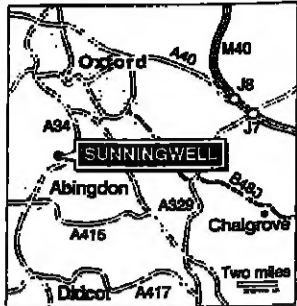
BY IAN MURRAY
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

A THIRD of an acre of boggy land in the heart of a hamlet mentioned in the Domesday Book has become a battlefield where the legal definition of the English village green will be decided.

The argument, which is destined to go to the House of Lords for settlement, pits the parish council of Sunningwell in Oxfordshire, backed by the Countryside Commission, against the trustees of the Diocese of Oxford, seconded by the Church Commissioners. At issue is whether the Church can sell off its property for housing development or whether it has been used as common land for so long that it has become a village green by default.

The Right Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, is caught in the middle, with parishioners accusing him of being more interested in money than the welfare of the people. Avis Mulhearn, chairwoman of the parish council, has boycotted the village church in protest at the proposed sale and has drafted in the backing of the Countryside Commission to help to argue the case before the courts.

The commission, which normally stays out of legal arguments, has decided to join the fight because it considers that this is a test case that can sort



out once and for all what constitutes a village green.

The field became the property of the village church, St Leonard's in 1871, when it was obtained by the rector in exchange for glebe land further away from the church. A glebe is property donated to the church which is supposed to be used to provide income to pay the local clergy, but for decades the field at Sunningwell has been used as common land.

Twenty years ago the General Synod decided to take glebe lands out of the control of the local clergy and administer them through committees of experts so that their potential could be realised. In 1991 the Oxford glebe committee sought to derive income from the field at Sunningwell by applying for planning permission to build two four-bedroom houses on a third of an acre of it. The Vale of White Horse District Council, under pressure from the

Government to find land for housing, gave planning consent and immediately the value of the ground shot up from a few hundred pounds to about £100,000. The council, however, now backs the parish and has contributed £2,500 to its legal costs. "Under trust rules the diocese has a responsibility to make the most of the income that can be derived from a glebe," Richard Thomas, the Oxford diocesan spokesman, said.

The legal duty was underlined in 1991 when the bishop lost a case in the High Court against the Church Commissioners. He argued that the Church should not be required to place its money in the most profitable investments but the court ruled that the overriding obligation was to make money.

Development on a registered village green is illegal, so the parish tried to persuade Oxford County Council to designate it as one. Having failed, the parish has applied for a judicial review in the High Court. Whatever the ruling, the issue is seen as so important that it will bypass the Court of Appeal and move straight to the Lords.

Under the 1965 Commons Registration Act, any private land that had been used as a green for 20 years qualified as a village green provided that it was unfenced and was not used secretly even though the owner had not given express permission for the public to go there. "That definition has been muddled by later High Court rulings which say that those using the land need to believe they have the right to do so because they live in the area," Paul Johnson, the Countryside Commission's legal expert on village greens, said. "That interpretation does not seem to achieve what Parliament meant and we will have to ask the Lords."

The Rev Tom Gibbons, the rector of St Leonard's, said: "We ought to be looking at what is the aim of our Church: to preach the Gospel or to make money."



Avis Mulhearn by the disputed piece of boggy land



The Middle Temple hall. The practice of students eating dinners at their Inn goes back to the 13th century

Inns of Court scrap medieval dinners rule for Bar students

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Bar tradition dating from medieval times whereby student barristers have to "eat dinners" at their Inn of Court to qualify at the Bar is to be scrapped.

Students on the one-year Bar vocational course will no longer have to eat 18 formal dinners in the hall of their Inn during term times, wearing their gowns and complying with various customs and rituals as they have done since the 13th century.

The move, to be brought in this October, constitutes a return to the Inns' traditional role in providing education for student barristers — the first formal Inns' teaching, apart from some recent advocacy courses, since 1600. Proposals will go before the Council of the Inns of Court this week from all four Inns — Middle and Inner Temple, Gray's and Lincoln's — enabling students to choose from various activities at their Inn, including residential weekends, one-day lecture programmes or lecture

evenings combined with buffet suppers.

Formal dining in hall will still be on offer, but eating dinners will no longer be required for students to notch up the necessary qualifying units in order to keep terms.

Lord Justice Staughton, a Court of Appeal judge and treasurer of the Inner Temple, said: "It is not so much abolishing a tradition as bringing a great tradition up

to date, which needed to be done." Brigadier Peter Little, sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple, said: "In a sense, we are returning to the original idea of what keeping terms meant and making it an essential part of the education of a barrister."

When students do still dine in hall, the dinners will be combined with activities such as lectures or debates, he added. The traditional idea of the

dinners is that students absorb the ethos of the Bar and mingle with their contemporaries and with the benchers of the Inns — the QCs and judges who are its governors.

The Inns had been urged to review the system because, from next autumn, several institutions outside London will be providing the Bar vocational course. Students outside London would have had to travel hundreds of miles.

Martin Bowley, QC, a bencher of the Inner Temple who has led the call for reform, welcomed the proposals. He had argued that if students had to travel to the dinners, it would "result in the social base for recruiting Bar students becoming narrower, and it is already too restricted".

The report from the Inns to their governing body, the council, is likely to be approved and then to go to the Bar Council. The Bar Council said it supported the changes.

Law report, page 40

DINING FOR DINING'S SAKE

The cost to students ranges from £7.50 for a three-course meal to £20 for a "grand night". Rituals vary from Inn to Inn. At some, if students fail to toast their colleagues in the right order or commit some other faux pas they could be asked to deliver an impromptu speech. Colin Davidson, catering manager of the Middle Temple, said yesterday's menu was: cream of vegetable soup, roast loin of pork and roast potatoes with broccoli

followed by blackcurrant cheesecake. The cost, heavily subsidised, was £7.50.

Students sit in a group or "mess" of four on long tables. One bottle of wine is provided for each mess. The benchers had a different menu (melon and figs, noisettes of lamb and sorbet baskets) and better quality wines. But recently the Inns have become more aware that eating dinners have become "dining for dining's sake".

NEWS

Mrs Scargill arrested in mine protest

Anne Scargill, wife of the president of the National Union of Mineworkers, was arrested and released twice yesterday morning, without charge, while protesting against open-cast mining near the home of Richard Budge, the owner of the RJB mining company.

Mrs Scargill, 52, was among several demonstrators arrested at Wiseton, Nottinghamshire. After she was released, she said: "I don't know why they arrested me. They showed me in the bus and said it was for breach of the peace."

Bishops hit home

Bishops join street sellers of *The Big Issue* today. The Bishop of Guildford, the Right Rev John Gladwin, said: "This draws attention to the need for political parties to take homelessness more seriously."

Comet relief

The comet Hale-Bopp will be more noticeable in the evenings over the next fortnight, peaking by the end of the month. It is already visible as a smudge of light in the northwest sky before dawn.

Global conquest

The global audience for the BBC World Service has grown to 143 million listeners a week, up three million on last year. The main increases came from re-broadcasts in Poland, and in French for Africa.

Pond accident

The daughter of the writer and broadcaster Muriel Gray was critically ill in hospital after falling into a garden pond in Bearsden, Glasgow. Two-year-old Rowan Barbour is described as critical but stable.

Too many cooks

Benefit fraud investigators who went to a restaurant in Nottingham found the chefs had fled, leaving pans bubbling over on the cookers. The campaign against dole fraud has saved £640,000.

Clarke tops poll

A survey of about 100 MPs chose Kenneth Clarke as the most impressive parliamentarian this winter. This is the first time a Tory has been selected since 1993 — when the top man was also Mr Clarke.

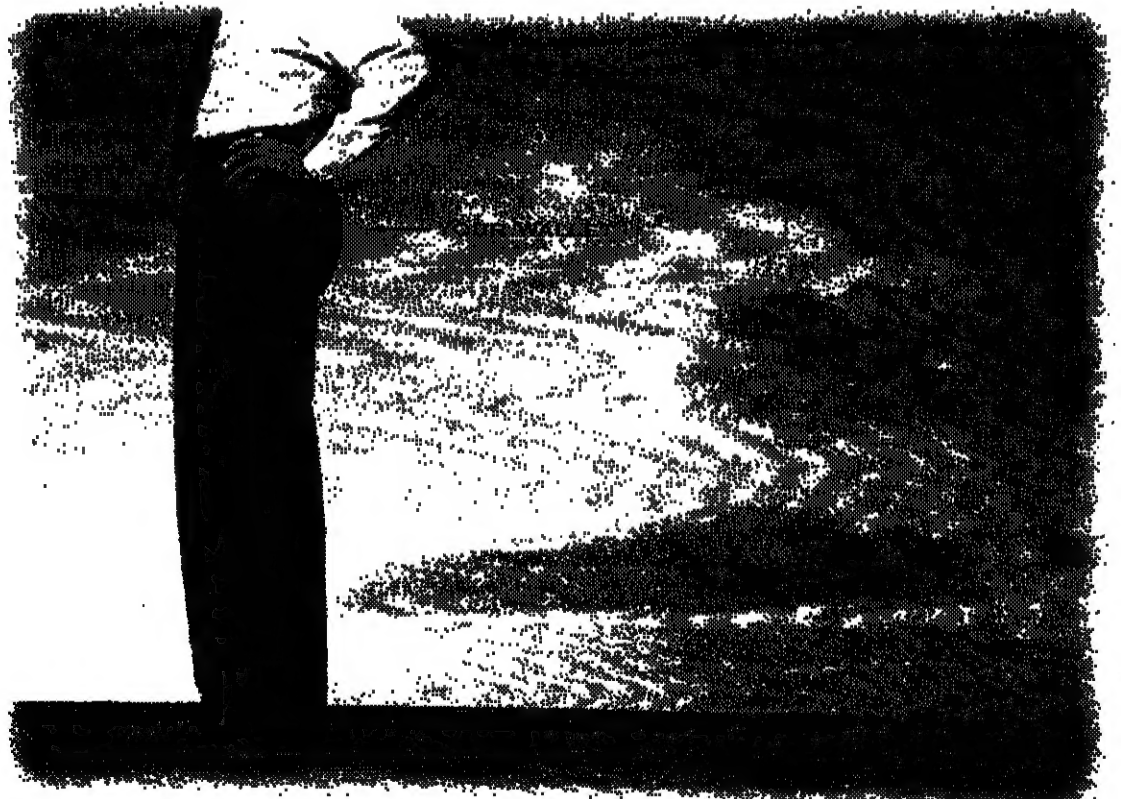
GET UP TO SPEED

You should now have your tax affairs in order

If you usually receive a tax return the new Self Assessment form will be arriving in early April. Get off to a flying start by first making sure your affairs are up-to-date and in order. If you need help, contact your tax office during office hours (the telephone number is at the top of your tax return). Or in the evening and at weekends, call the Self Assessment Helpline on 0645 000 444 (calls are charged at local rates).

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THE TIMES
Farmers
by South
anti-evi

Sick Zaire
the healing
of Kabila's re

Farmers outraged by South African anti-eviction Bill

FROM R.W. JOHNSON IN JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's mainly white farmers are up in arms against the introduction by the ANC-led Government of a new Bill aimed at making it extremely difficult — and in some cases impossible — to evict black workers living on their farms.

The Government has been shocked by the fury of the farmers' opposition to the measure and has hurriedly suspended advertisements publishing the workers' new rights pending further negotiations.

The crisis over the Bill has highlighted the parlous state of relations between the Government and the farmers. During the liberation struggle farmers were seen as epitomising brutal white supremacy.

In part this was simply because farmers were the central historic figures of Afrikanerdom (in Afrikaans Boer means "farmer") but it was also because stories have

circulated for generations of farmers beating their African workers, sometimes even to death. Farmers' organisations do not deny that such atrocities took place but insist that such cases are now rare.

This cuts no ice at all with ANC organisations such as the National Land Committee, which wants to see the expropriation of white-owned land and argues that "it is high time the Government realised it needs to treat white farmers with something close to an iron fist".

Farmers, for their part, are close to despair at the continuing high rate of murderous attacks on farmers and their families, and in some parts of the country they have demanded the public hanging of such assailants. Most own a considerable armoury of guns and the farmers' organisations operate their own collective security networks known as Farmers' Watch. Everywhere they complain

of large-scale rustling of their livestock and many of them have spent heavily on security systems, including electrified wire, closed-circuit television and their own radio alarm systems. In addition, many farmers, fearing land invasions and suspecting that the Government would bring in security of tenure legislation, have been pre-emptively evicting farm workers from their land for several years.

One of the key provisions of the new Bill is a clause which gives farm workers the right to have visitors stay with them. Farmers believe that this will encourage further land invasions and that, if large numbers of strangers are allowed to roam their farms, rustling is bound to increase.

The farmers look uneasily northwards to the way Zimbabwe's President Mugabe has incessantly railed against white farmers since independence, without ever redistributing land to the poor.



A dead camel near a dry dam outside Wajir district in northeastern Kenya symbolises the loss of 30 to 50 per cent of the area's livestock, wiped out after three consecutive rainy seasons failed in 18 months. Livestock prices

Drought threat in Kenya

are plunging, bringing financial ruin and sometimes death to nomadic Somali herders, whose economy relies on animals. December's

short rains failed entirely, starving cattle, goats and camels. Cereal prices are rising, adding to food shortages. In Wajir, 300 miles

from Nairobi, 27.9 per cent of children aged under five were malnourished last October. "We have a situation which is serious and moving towards an emergency," according to Adam Leach of Oxfam. (Reuters)

Beijing on alert after bus bombing

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

EXTRA police were on duty yesterday at venues frequented by foreign tourists, after the official media admitted at the weekend that an explosion on a passenger bus in the busy Xidan shopping district on Friday was caused by a home-made bomb.

Anyone with any information about the explosion was asked to dial a hotline. A substantial reward was promised if any tip led to the arrest of the bomber or bombers. There was no indication of whom the authorities thought might be to blame, though police have told bus conductors to keep an eye on members of the Uighur community, an ethnic Turkic-speaking minority from northwest Xinjiang province who want more autonomy.

In Taipei last night Taiwan's state-funded Central News Agency reported that Xinjiang separatists based in Kazakhstan had claimed responsibility for the Beijing attack.

Sick Zaire awaits the healing knife of Kabila's rebels

FROM SAM KILEY IN KINSHASA

MARCEL punched the buttons on the lift he operates in Zaire's Information Ministry and sulked. "I got paid yesterday in prostates. That's sick. You can't eat prostates," he muttered.

He meant the latest currency launched on the public, bills of more than 100,000 zaires which the entire population has boycotted and named after President Mobutu's cancerous gland.

What did Marcel think of the frantic diplomatic efforts in the United Nations and world capitals that have been launched to put an end to Zaire's civil war which, leaders fear, may lead to the "disintegration" of Zaire's state and the destabilisation of the nine countries along its borders?

"Nothing," he replied. "What state? The prostate is symbolic of the myth that

Zaire is what you would call a state. It's not anything but a name for a country. The whole place is dying of cancer, its bones have gone." He has a point, and shares it with the vast majority of fellow Zaireans living in the capital, Kinshasa, where operations are conducted under cannibalised car headlights and teachers are paid in food.

Nobody, save the Zaireans, seems to have noticed that Zaire has quietly disintegrated economically and administratively. They want Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, to march into the capital to put an end to Zaire's non-government. "Zaire has already disintegrated economically into

separate parts," said an economic expert at a Western embassy.

The diamond and gold-rich provinces of east and west Kasai boycotted the introduction of the "new zaire", which replaced a currency trading at six million to the dollar, in 1993. As a snub to the central Government the ancient notes are still the only "legal tender" in the provinces. The "prostates", which can be used to pay government taxes but for nothing else, trade at less than half their face value.

The economic chaos has been more than matched by Zaire's Monty Python ap-

proach to government. When Mr Kabila recently attended talks brokered by President Mandela of South Africa, his main worry was that he did not know who he was being asked to open negotiations with. "I do not know who I am supposed to talk to," he told diplomats in Johannesburg.

Mr Kabila is being asked to accept a ceasefire along his front in eastern Zaire where government forces, unpaid and seldom resupplied, have abandoned vast tracts of land or strategic towns without firing a shot.

"I can see no reason why Kabila should stop fighting now. He will soon take Kisangani, and that could result in a change of government at the centre. Just what everyone wants to see," said a European diplomat. Marcel was more direct. "Bring us Kabila," he said.

Zaire is only a name for a country. The whole place is dying of cancer?

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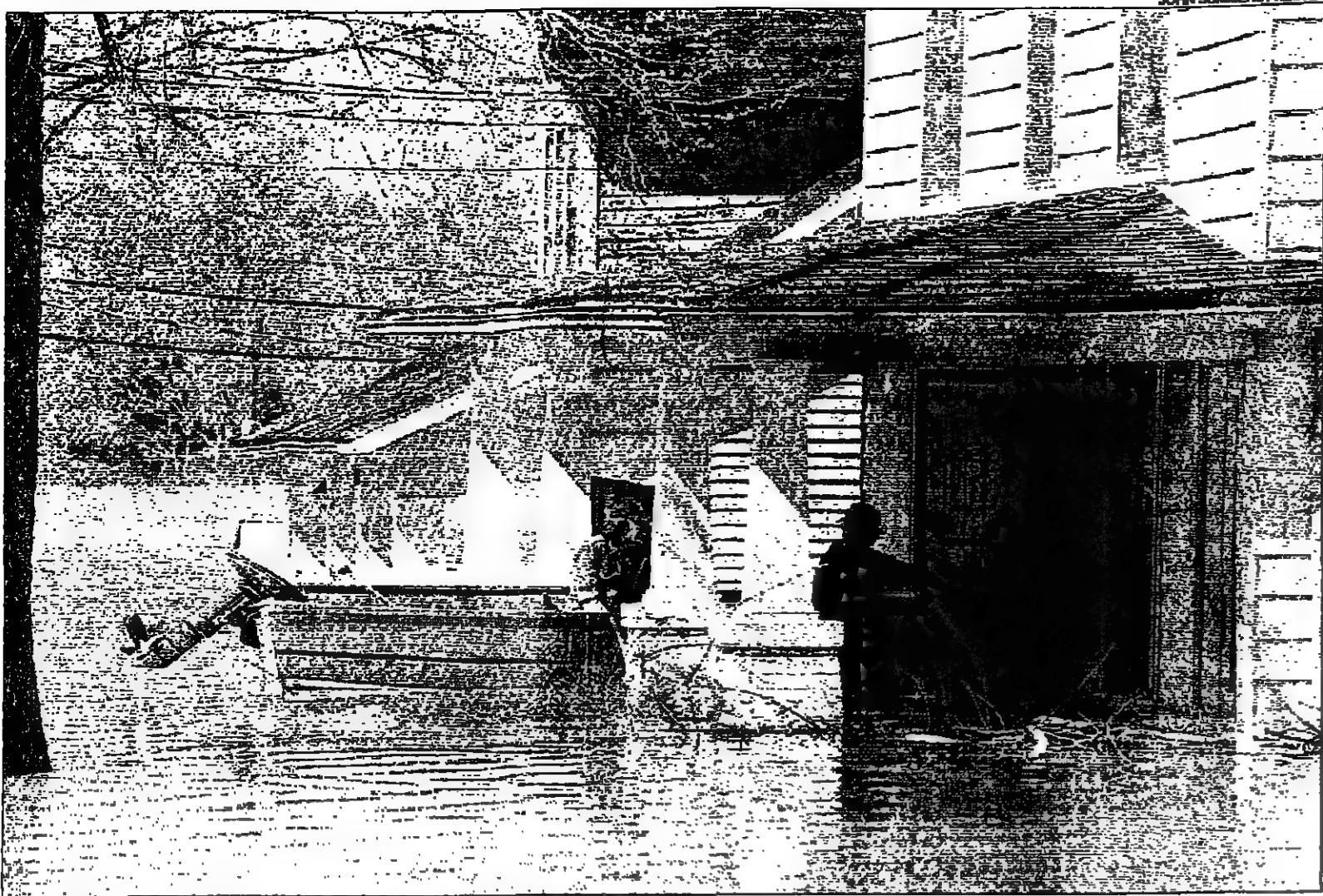


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THE TIMES
Albania
Civilians are
injured as
leaderless
crowd loots
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Residents of Lebanon Junction, Kentucky, examine the damage caused by floods, which began to recede at the weekend. Tornadoes in Arkansas a week ago and flooding since then in West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee have claimed at least 58 lives

US politicians were alerted to Chinese funding

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE FBI warned six members of Congress last summer that the Chinese Government wanted to funnel illegal campaign contributions to them through companies and individuals in order to influence policy, it emerged yesterday.

Dianne Feinstein, a Democratic Senator for California who sits on the Foreign Relations Committee, received the FBI briefing on June 14. She decided on Friday to return \$12,000 (£7,500) in campaign contributions from donors linked with the Lippo Group, an Indonesian conglomerate with investments in China, even though it remains unclear whether those payments were part of a Chinese government plan.

Yesterday's disclosures by *The Washington Post*, attributed to American government officials, come during a whirlwind of allegations about Democratic fundraising practices in the last election. It is

illegal for candidates to accept any foreign contributions, but suggestions that the Chinese Government sought to buy influence with cash have caused the greatest concern, coming at a strained point in US-Chinese relations, when many Americans fear that China will soon be an economic rival and military threat.

Government officials believe they have "specific and credible" information of Chinese plans to spend nearly \$2 million to influence congressional campaigns from the spring of 1995 onwards, and "conclusive evidence" that some reached America last year. According to yesterday's reports, the FBI warnings were delivered to members of Congress in individual classified briefings, which said: "We have reason to believe that the Government of China may try to make contributions to members of Congress through Asian donors."

However, officials are not clear whether the money reached campaigns, nor has the Justice Department found that any Congress member knowingly received illegal payments from China. The Chinese Embassy in Washington has denied allegations that it or the Beijing Government attempted to influence the American elections.

Leon Panetta, the former White House Chief of Staff, said yesterday that neither he nor the President knew of any FBI warning about Chinese attempts to contribute cash. He added that the Justice Department was right to investigate the matter "because clearly this kind of thing should not happen". The Justice Department task force was created last year to investigate the question of fundraising techniques, and has focused on the question of

foreign influence. The new details have emerged from the Justice investigation into the role of John Huang, a former Lippo Group executive appointed by Mr Clinton to the Commerce Department, who later became a top Democratic fundraiser.

Officials are also examining the role of Johnny Chung and Charles Yuh Lin Tzie, two other Taiwanese-Americans with a central role in the Clinton campaign's fundraising. The Democratic National Committee has now returned almost \$3 million of contributions raised by Mr Huang and others because the donors were not identified or were foreign.

Mr Panetta said yesterday that he could not explain why Mr Huang had visited the White House 78 times during the campaign. Mr Chung 49 times and Mr Tzie more than 20 times. He added that the White House often issued thousands of invitations in a week, and while the Secret Service checked whether guests would pose a physical threat to the President, little care had been taken to probe their backgrounds.



Feinstein returned \$12,000 contributions

Pentagon papers reveal 'dirty war' in Latin America

TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE United States helped to organise a covert training programme throughout Latin America, at least until the early 1980s, that led to a string of kidnappings, torture and deaths.

Newly released papers by the Pentagon show that US Army training manuals, intended as instructional materials to help friendly governments fight Communist rebels, were instead used as handbooks for clandestine operations against domestic political opponents.

The manuals, known as Project X, taught foreign officers to offer a bounty for the capture or death of insurgents, spy on non-violent political opponents, kidnap family members of rebels and blackmail unwanted informants.

Last year the Pentagon disclosed that the training booklets were distributed at the US Army School of the Americas, the camp now at Fort Benning in Georgia which trains South and Central American military officers and has long been known as the school for dictators.

The new documents, however, prove that the original manuals, first written by counter-insurgency experts in 1965, gained a far wider circulation among US military personnel working in

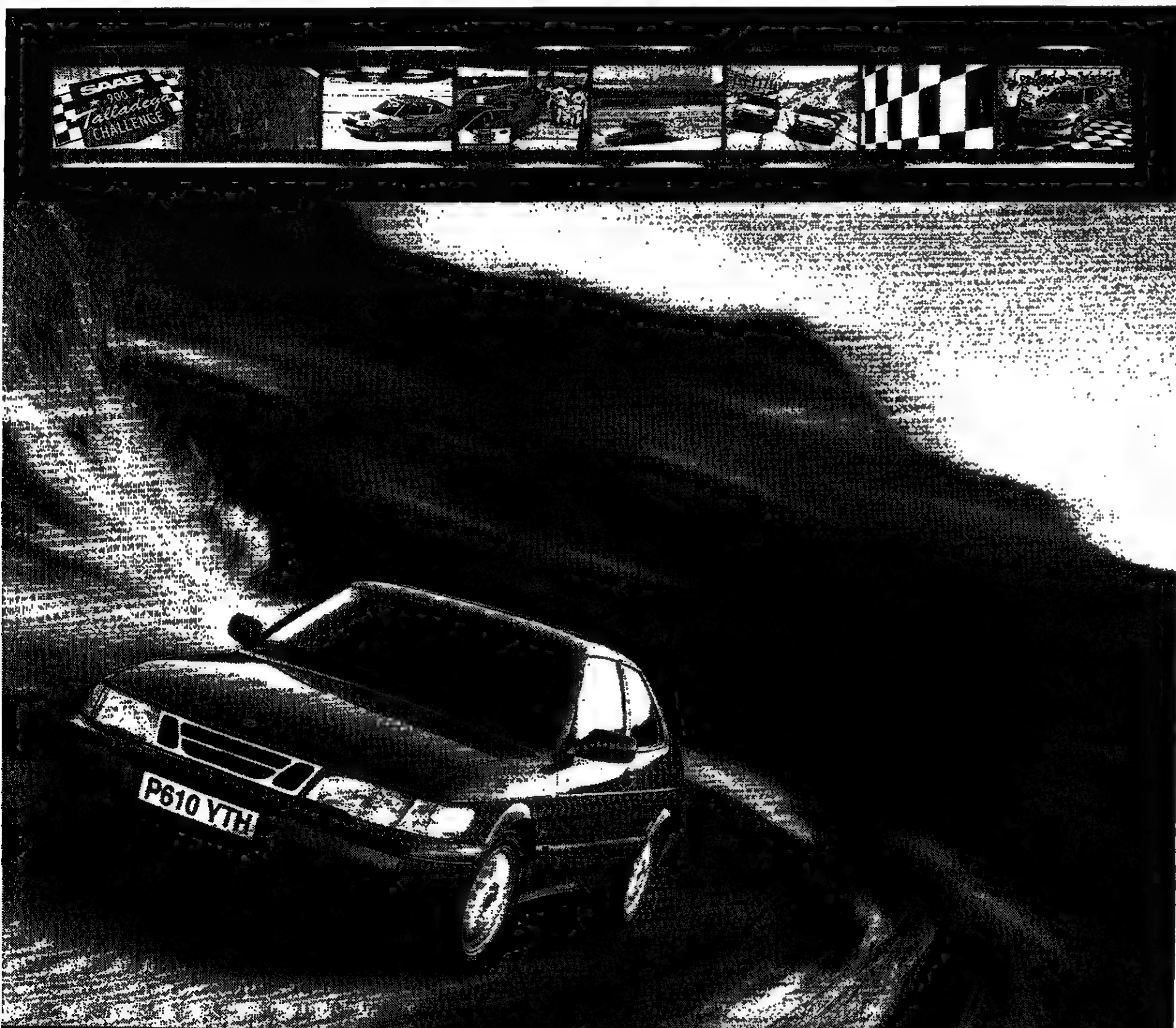
Latin America. Project X is thought to have been discontinued in the early 1980s when the American-funded joint foreign intelligence assistance programme came to an end. But some of the manuals were used on an occasional basis until the Defence Intelligence Agency ordered they be withdrawn in 1991.

The Pentagon attempted yesterday to play down the significance of the latest papers, arguing that the number of "objectionable passages" were no more than two dozen in three training manuals out of 300.

The original documents were first written by experts at the US Army Intelligence School. They included lessons in creating "black, grey or white" lists of potential enemies.

Guidelines were given on aerial surveillance, electronic eavesdropping, interrogation, censorship and counter-sabotage measures. The most damaging passages advised the abduction of family members and the "prioritisation" of opponents for "abduction, exile, physical beatings and execution".

Even infiltration and suppression of democratic political groups was recommended, including political parties, unions, religious and student groups.



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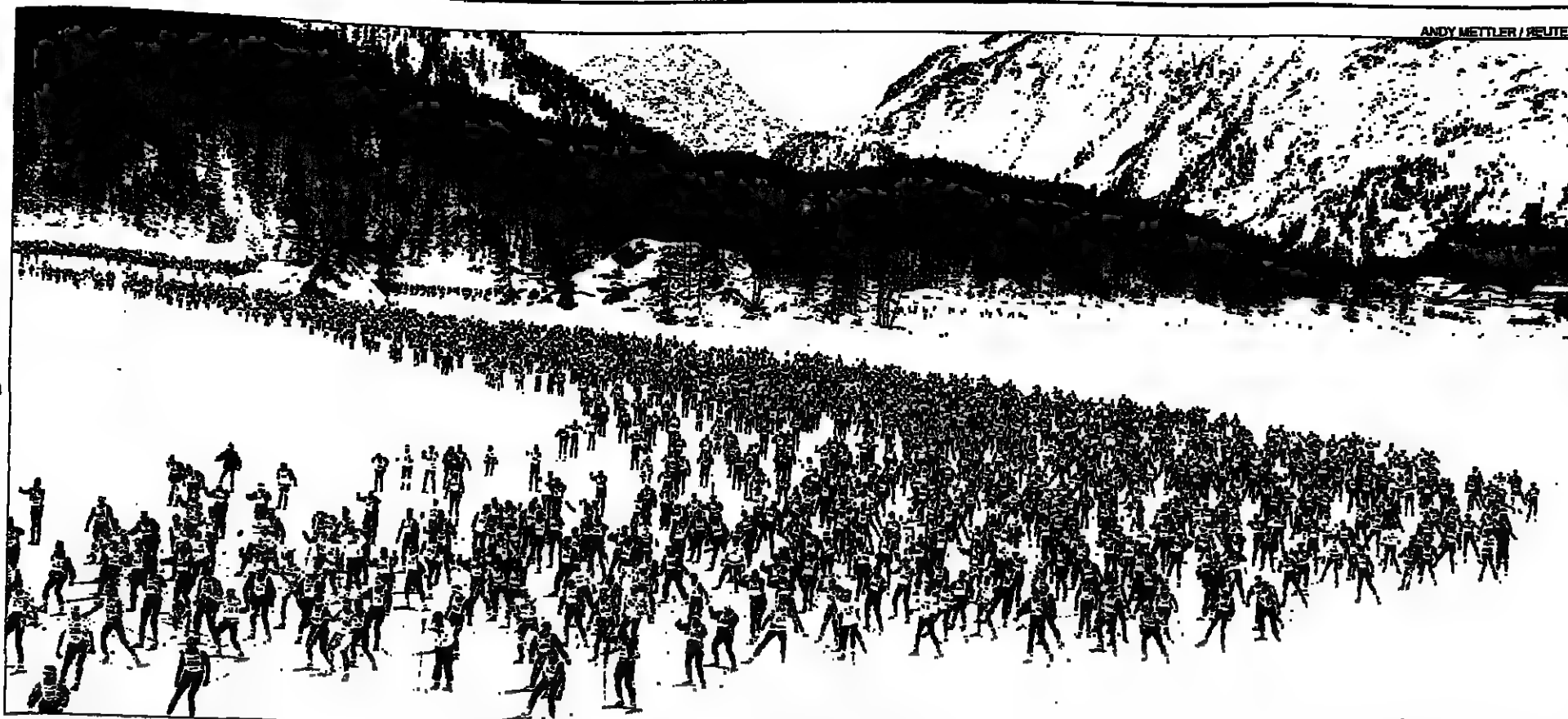
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السؤال الأول



Some of the record 12,574 competitors in the 26-mile Engadin cross-country ski marathon, from Maloja to St Moritz and Zuoz in southeast Switzerland, cross Sils Lake yesterday

Brussels pushed to settle conflict on eastern front

The town of Apeldoorn will hardly enter history alongside Versailles or Yalta, but the map of future Europe could be shaped a little by a gathering of statesmen in the drab Dutch dorp later this week.

The occasion is one of the twice-yearly "informal" sessions of European Union foreign ministers. For once the 15 are to eschew domestic preoccupations, such as their wrangle over the imminent "Maastricht II" treaty. They are to do something rare: think big.

Under pressure from the calendar, Albania's crisis and Turkish threats, the 15 are to thrash out their most daunting challenge: how to manage a transition that, over the next few years, will see the prosperous West shift its frontier eastward by hundreds of miles.

The ministers are to breach a taboo by dropping the pretence that expanding Nato and the EU are items for separate discussion, handled by different bureaucracies, albeit both based in Brussels. The spur is a double deadline which commits the EU to starting accession talks with at least some of the ten former Communist candidates and Cyprus by the end of the year and Nato's drive to invite new members in July.

Current wisdom says the first batch of newcomers to both clubs will be the same three states — Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic — with the possibility of outsiders such as Slovenia and Romania. New Nato members are expected within two years, while entry to the EU is unlikely before 2002.

The EU, which includes 11 of Nato's 16 members, has been resisting attempts by Washington to co-ordinate the two enlargements. The US wants the EU to soothe the Baltic states with a promise of EU membership when they are excluded from Nato.

Washington is worried that the EU is distracted by its employment crisis and obsession with monetary



union and wants it to speed up its eastward move. Privately, many European officials do not share America's enthusiasm for Nato enlargement and fear that the welcome mat for a chosen few could force the unlucky candidates back into the zone of an antagonised Russia.

Turkey, a staunch Nato member, has now forced the Nato-EU link, by threatening to veto the alliance's expansion unless it gains entry to the Union.

Meeting at a Christian Democratic forum, Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, and other leaders decreed that there could be no question of Turkish EU membership. Hans van Mierlo, the Dutch Foreign Minister, stirred Turkish ire last month by saying it was time to be honest and accept that the EU had no room for a big and poor Muslim country.

This does not please London and Washington.

Both are alarmed at the consequences of keeping out Turkey, which has been knocking at the EU door since the start of the Common Market in 1957.

With America determined to wash its hands of Bosnia by the end of the year, the EU faces a challenge in ensuring a stable Balkans. Even more urgent, the EU's credibility is at stake in Albania, where failure to stop a civil war would be seen as another EU debacle and ill omen for its struggle to take responsibility for its own continent.

CHARLES BREMNER

Malcolm Rifkind, page 20

WORLD SUMMARY

RAF crew in fraud inquiry

London: RAF flight crew involved in Nato operations over Bosnia have been questioned by military police in an inquiry into alleged fraudulent expenses claims (Michael Evans writes).

It is believed that up to 50 pilots and navigators, serving in Gioia del Colle, Italy, are involved. The expenses were for home stays during briefings at other bases. The inquiry could lead to courts martial.

Netanyahu faces revolt

Jerusalem: Benjamin Netanyahu was fighting to hold his ruling coalition together after nine months as Prime Minister (Christopher Walker writes). At least eight right-wing deputies plan to vote against the Government in a no-confidence motion, alleging Mr Netanyahu has willingly given up part of the Biblical land of Israel.

Pit protests hit tax talks

Bonn: The fate of cross-party talks on German tax reforms was in the balance yesterday after opposition Social Democrats pulled out in sympathy with miners protesting at government plans to slash coal subsidies.

Protests swept Germany's mining regions and tempers ran high as miners took to the streets. (Reuters)

Cadets held after killings

Moscow: Two students at a Russian military college who fled with arms and ammunition after one of them shot dead five fellow cadets and an instructor yesterday surrendered to police and troops.

The two cadets, aged about 18, were tracked down after the incident at the Kamyshtin Military College, north of Volgograd. (Reuters)

Pioneer of H-bomb dies

Los Alamos: Carson Mark, a Manhattan Project scientist who led the team of physicists that developed the hydrogen bomb, has died aged 83 from complications after a fall, a spokesman said. He joined the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos in May 1945 and stayed after the war to head the theoretical division which developed the H-bomb. (AP)

Ivory ban

Abidjan: The Ivory Coast is to ban the ivory trade so as to protect the elephant. A new decree regulates ivory import and export and orders nationwide collection and itemising of ivory products. (AFP)

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Bonn expels US envoy for hi-tech espionage

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE German authorities have expelled an American diplomat for trying to obtain high-tech economic secrets. In the first such case since the Second World War, *Der Spiegel* news magazine, in its issue to be published today, claims that the expulsion was handed quietly and the diplomat was withdrawn rather than declared persona non grata.

The move reflects the new assertiveness of the German domestic intelligence service and a growing impatience in Bonn with American espionage activity. The Central Intelligence Agency and other US federal agencies have large stations in Germany.

In part this is a legacy of the Cold War, since much of the espionage work against the Soviet Union was carried out from German soil and in close liaison with the German intelligence services. It was also legal for the CIA to spy in Germany on Germans in so far as the Americans were protecting the security of the US bases in the country.

However, as the CIA's mission has shifted — focusing increasingly on economic and scientific information — so it has become more uncomfortable to its host countries in Western Europe. France, in particular, has been suspicious of the CIA station in Paris.

According to *Der Spiegel*, the expelled diplomat was caught trying to recruit senior

officials from Bonn's Economics Ministry and attempting to obtain information on sophisticated technological projects. The State Department refused to comment, and neither the CIA nor the German agencies were available for comment.

Der Spiegel's leak, however, is regarded as more than usually authentic. Decisions on spy expulsions have to be relayed to the parliamentary home affairs committee, which includes several articulate Social Democrats who have friendly relations with the press.

A British Secret Intelligence Service agent was quietly removed from her post in Berlin last year after she was named in the press. Three German spies were detained initially on the suspicion that they were illegally selling secrets to Britain. These charges were dropped, but an internal investigation nonetheless showed that the agents had tried to profit financially from a shared intelligence-gathering operation mounted by Germany and Britain.

The background to the case was one of infighting in the BND, the German external intelligence service. The BND, based outside Munich, is nowadays a far quieter place. The American expulsion is believed to have been generated entirely by the Cologne-based Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, the German equivalent of MI5.



Chirac bids farewell to the Gaullist heritage

Chirac to shed his de Gaulle image

BY ADAM SAGE

PRESIDENT CHIRAC will put aside his elevated Gaullist conception of the French presidency tonight in an attempt to show that he is capable of tackling France's daily economic difficulties.

The strategy will be made clear when M Chirac intervenes in a television programme about youth unemployment. The President has decided to move away from the style that marked the beginning of his seven-year term as he sought to echo his mentor, General Charles de Gaulle.

He will abandon his role as "he who reveals the truth", according to an aide. In his "modern conception" of the presidency, "he does not act on behalf of people, he encourages those who act", the aide said.

The new formula is a reaction to the widespread anger that greeted his initial attempts to reaffirm his Gaullist heritage as a head of state who defended France's interests abroad and set the broad outline of policy.

French 'anglophile' brands Britain as class-ridden failure

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

THE AUTHOR of a French textbook which condemns Britain as an economic and social failure yesterday described himself as an "anglophile". Isabelle Ayasch's comments summed up the ambivalent attitude of many French towards a neighbour they find fascinating, perplexing and irritating.

In recent days there has been a lengthy television programme on Franco-British relations, envious media coverage of Britain's millennium celebrations and the spotlight turned on Mlle Ayasch's textbook for students.

Mlle Ayasch, 29, a fluent English speaker who was at Oxford University between 1988 and 1990, paints Britain as a country handicapped both by its historic failure to overcome class divisions and by Thatcherism. The bilingual text says: "Britain is, in social terms, back where it was at the peak of the Industrial Revolution... except that there is no industrial revolution taking place at the moment. There might not even be one in the

future, because Britain is so divided on the social front that it is prevented from moving forward economically."

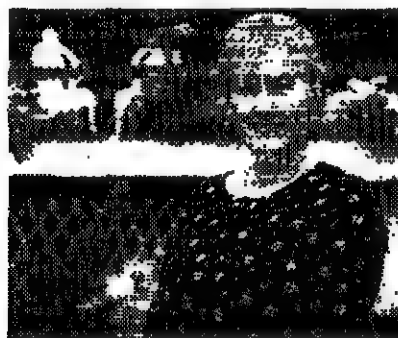
It goes on to explain how welfare cuts have prompted "wealthy people, with feelings of snobbish guilt, social conscience or a strong dose of condescension... to contribute to the work of charitable organisations".

Although Mlle Ayasch said she was "an academic, not a politician", her views are shared by much of the French establishment. Jacques Attali, a close associate of the late President Mitterrand, said in a recent interview: "Britain is on the way to becoming an underdeveloped country."

However, hostility towards Britain runs alongside a strong current of sympathy. Mlle Ayasch, for example, said: "I visit Britain every six weeks and I have friends all over the country, in London, Northampton, Wales and the North of England."

She said many of her criticisms of Britain could also be directed at France.

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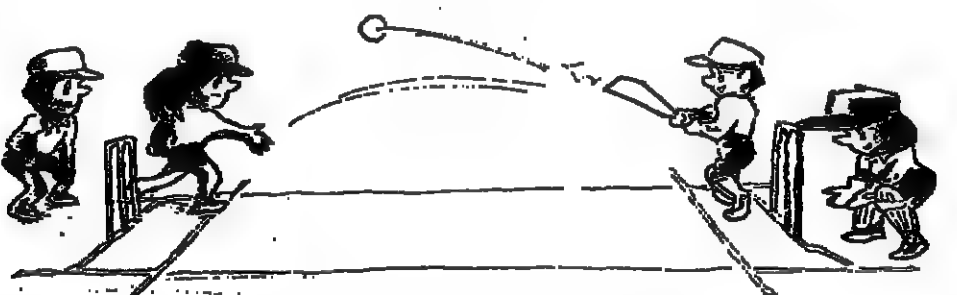
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A cartoon from a Hong Kong Cricket Association brochure aimed at children

Hong Kong cricket crusaders prepare for lengthy innings

FROM CATHERINE FIELD IN HONG KONG

THE image of a Chinese wicketing a cricket ball may seem as unusual as a Geordie at the mahjong table, but some determined people in Hong Kong are trying to change that.

The colony's first cricket club was founded in 1851, ten years after the Union Jack was hoisted over the Frigate Harbour. The sport survived two world wars, the Cultural Revolution and the shift in the mid-1970s of the Hong Kong Cricket Club's pitch from the business district of Victoria to a slope overlooking Happy Valley racecourse.

But it was always a sport for whites and wealthy Chinese at that. For the excluded Chinese, cricket seemed a bizarre act of occasional exercise, glimpsed from the top of a passing tram.

Now, in the dying months of British rule, cricketers are fighting to preserve their sport for the time when China takes over Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Cricket Association is energetically

promoting the sport in schools, seeking with some success to have it named a "core sport", a status ranking it equal in terms of resources and education time to the other big games, such as table tennis and badminton.

"There are now cricket courses in more than 50 schools, and in our cricket centres we have 450 children, about 100 of whom are Chinese," Russell Mawhinney, a former New Zealand first-class player and senior member of the association, said.

Aware of Hong Kong's lack of open spaces and flat land, the crusaders are promoting "diamond cricket". Batsmen, each with a blue plastic wicket, are placed at the four points of a diamond, and a bowler deployed in the middle. He bowls to each batsman in turn; when the ball — of orange plastic — is hit, the batsman is obliged to run to the next wicket. Fielders are placed in and around the diamond, which can be as small as half a tennis court.

It may lack the grace of England versus Australia at Lord's, but the game is popular. There is a quick turnover in batsmen, which means every child gets a strike and the action is fast. Girls are being encouraged to play as much as boys.

"I brought my son first, just to try it out, and I liked the game. It seemed to be a good, positive game," says Antoine Ng. "By playing cricket my son also learns about team spirit. Also, unlike many other games, there is less chance for the children to get hurt."

His eight-year-old boy, Etienne, says: "Cricket is fun — and really more fun when I'm batting. I want to be a good batsman."

Thirty-three Hong Kong coaches requested international accreditation in 1995, rising to 70 last year. Teams from the colony play against Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand and its players have gone to the Australian Cricket Academy and Lord's Summer Cricket School.

Starting today: an essential guide for every parent by The Times education experts on Who will be top of the class?

This week *The Times* will be publishing comprehensive league tables of the best — and the worst — of our primary schools. Today we examine the background to a revolution in education

The boycotts have passed, the court case is over, now see what all the fuss was about. Tomorrow the first primary school league tables for England will be published.

After more than five years of planning by ministers and civil servants, matched by stern resistance from the teaching profession, parents will finally have some objective information on primary schools. Rudimentary though the comparisons will be, they will provide shocks for some previously satisfied customers as they see what neighbouring schools are achieving.

Stand by for a welter of objections as the results highlight a select group of schools getting all their pupils to the level expected of an 11-year-old, while others register alarmingly few successes. Last week, even before the results were published, two unions had picked them to pieces.

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers found fault with the marking, the phraseology of questions and the whole approach of the tests. Head teachers concentrated their fire on the way the tables are compiled. But parents, who have had to make their choice of school solely on impressions and local reputation, will have little sympathy. Perfection may take a little longer, but they will settle for this for now.

All this week, *The Times* will be examining the process of choosing a primary school, one of the key decisions any parent has to make. As well as ranking all the schools that submitted a full set of results, the series will offer other pointers to identifying the best state primary and preparatory schools. We will also look at nurseries and give a flavour of the tests themselves.

Many in the education world were determined that the tables should never be published because they believe that the wide variations in schools' intakes render the results misleading. More than 1,000 governing bodies refused to submit their teachers' assessments of their pupils, and the National Association of Head Teachers sponsored a High Court challenge to the way the tables are compiled. In the end, however, fewer than 100

will be missing, many for reasons beyond their control.

Tomorrow, no doubt, some schools will have reason to challenge their results. But hard cases make bad law. The exercise marks a milestone in the Government's information revolution with this first incursion into primary education.

Just as the secondary school tables exposed the realities of parental choice, the primary equivalent will foster new aspirations for the younger age group. Most children in England go to their nearest primary school but, until

now, their parents had little information about the alternatives. At the very least, they will now be armed with some pertinent questions.

The tables would not have been published this year had it not been for a disastrous set of results in 1995. Fewer than half of all 11-year-olds reached the level expected of their age group in English and mathematics. The science results were better, but so far out of kilter with the other subjects that standards had to be readjusted for 1996.

Successive reports by school inspectors have identified the seven to 11 age group as the weak link in the national curriculum. In trying to cope with a wide range of subjects, primary schools often let slip the vital building blocks of education: English and mathematics.

Clillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, infuriated teachers with a blatant U-turn in which she ruled out league tables

for at least a year and then, within a fortnight and under considerable political pressure, announced the opposite. But the change of heart appears to have paid dividends: both English and mathematics showed significant improvements last summer.

Yet are primary schools really improving as a result of the tests and the tables, or are they merely getting better at preparing their pupils for assessment? Other new tests and examinations, such as GCSE and the assessments of seven-year-olds, have shown similar rises as teachers have got used to them.

Nick Tate, the chief executive of the quango responsible for the tests, is unrepentant. "People can say schools are just teaching to the tests, but if we are testing the right things, that is what we want them to do," he says. "We are convinced that the exercise is raising standards."

One improved set of results does not mean that all is well in primary schools, however. Some 40 per cent of 11-year-olds are still failing to reach their expected level before moving on to secondary school, and the Office for Standards in Education still considers this age group the least well taught.

The lesson surely is that the tests and the publication of results must remain and improve if standards are to rise further. They focus schools on the basic skills their pupils need to flourish in secondary education.

In the past year, many primary schools have introduced revision classes for the first time in decades and set about polishing up techniques that were once second nature to their pupils. There has even been a knock-on effect in schools looking again at streaming — until recently anathema in the primary sector.

Such changes would never have come about without the stimulus of testing and the publication of results. There will be shortcomings in tomorrow's tables, but they are nothing compared with the consequences of going back to the bad old days of primary education.

JOHN O'LEARY



Alert, and eager to learn... children of primary school age have no preconceptions of what is "boring" or "difficult"

Conkers, maypoles, and all

Between the ages of five and 11, I attended a Church of England primary school which had no indoor sanitation, no special learning aids (unless you count a blackboard) and a firm belief in the beneficial disciplinary effects of a gym shoe energetically applied to the back of the legs. When the moment came to choose a school for my five-year-old son, I naturally wanted him to have the same advantages.

A colleague once accused me of having been brought up in the 19th century — and when I consider my early education, I can see that he might have had a point. My primary school, originally a 19th-century dame

school, was housed in a Victorian Gothic building and had overflowed at some point into a couple of prefabricated huts. The facilities were scarcely more sophisticated than they can have been 100 years before.

The lavatories, much frequented by enormous spiders, were situated in a charming little rustic outhouse in the middle of the playground. Our school milk came in crates of 1/3-pint bottles which, frozen in winter, would be placed to thaw out by the oil-fired stove. Our games — skipping, bowling hoops, conkers, marbles —

followed some mysterious seasonal pattern. "The big ones," the headmistress, Mrs Turner, would announce in awful tones at the beginning of the spring term, "are NOT to play keepies with the little ones."

May Day, the high point of the summer term, was celebrated with complicated dances around a maypole and the election (by the boys, in a secret ballot) of one of the Big Girls as May Queen.

What I wanted for my son was not so much the picturesque rural deprivations of my

own childhood (hard to come by, in any case, in southeast London) but the rigour, the unwillingness to put up with anything less than excellence of Mrs Turner, and her staff. Whoever set John Stuart Mill to learning Greek at three and-a-half had the right idea. Children of primary age are perfect raw learning material. They lack preconceptions of what is "boring", what "difficult". They will learn a French word — or a classical Greek one — as readily as an English one, a poem by Byron as gladly as one by Kit Wright. They find work as interesting as play, and have no need to be tricked or jollied into learning. This is not a frame of mind

THE MOTHER'S STORY

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Mr Angry counts his blessings



DES JENSON

Ben Elton is 37, greying just perceptibly, and married. Last week he hosted the Brit Awards without a hitch — and without a single gobby remark or in-your-face piece of body language.

He was subdued, restrained, did not want to intrude on what was an evening for the viewers at home. He wishes the BBC had run it live, there was so little that needed cutting.

If he was a little po-faced during Mrs Merton's joke about cocaine, well, this was because he nearly missed it. When she said "Everyone backstage is looking for Charlie", he thought it surreal, only catching on when she repeated: "Charlie, Charlie." "It's not a phrase I hear all the time," he says. "I go to the Groucho Club about once a year. And I don't see this kind of thing going on there," he adds.

Elton is a pub man. Indeed, when we meet at the London Welsh Centre, where his play *Popcorn* is being rehearsed before its West End run, his get-up is that of any "bloke-in-a-pub" since 1980 — tight red T-shirt, checked blouson jacket, jeans.

His love of a beer was one reason he accepted the Brits job. He had a night off on tour: "So I was in the pub. And nights off on tour are a bit strange. You tend to get drunk..."

To offset this disaster, he now exercises. "I made a decision in my early 30s because I love to drink, particularly beer. If I don't drink one night, it'll be a decision."

Rumours of a personal trainer are untrue, he insists, although he did go to the gym three years ago. "I used to play squash with Ade Edmonson (Niv in *The Young Ones*, married to Jennifer Saunders), but he lives in Richmond now."

"Ah, Richmond. And Elton lives in Primrose Hill, another leafy, although scarcely trendy, part of London. It is the classic diary of a thirtysomething."

Whatever happened to the "smug git in a shiny suit" who swore about Thatcher on *Saturday Live*? He's certainly not here in the rehearsal room, posing for the photographer with his feet just hanging off the sofa — "Well, I mean, if I saw a picture of a bloke with his feet on the sofa, I'd think what a git, wouldn't you? Even on *trains* I put a newspaper on the seat before I put my feet up."

What a wonderful vision — the man who defined the tone of Eighties humour, papering train seats. But then he always did have a well developed social conscience (some critics felt it to be self-righteously overdeveloped).

Born in Catford, but brought up near Guildford — his father, of Jewish extraction, was a professor at Surrey University — he read drama at Manchester University. There he met Rik Mayall, two years his senior. At 21 he became the BBC's youngest ever scriptwriter.

But in 1981 there was a six-month gap when he needed money, and he turned to doing stand-up at the Comedy Store. Suddenly the young man who had wanted

Ben Elton has moved from aggressively political comic to happily married man. Interview by Grace Bradberry

to write for *The Two Ronnies* became the archetypal Eighties stand-up. Not necessarily the best — Alexei Sayle described his act as "like a dog shaking hands" — but the most aggressively political.

During that decade he also co-wrote *The Young Ones*, followed by *Filthy Rich and Catflap*, and the second series onwards of *Blackadder*. Yet although these were his finest achievements, it was the stand-up, particularly as host of *Saturday Live*, that set his image as "Bolshie Ben".

The Nineties have seen him move into the mainstream — though even in the Eighties he stood in for *Wogan*. He has written four novels, three plays and a sitcom, *The Thin Blue Line*, which attracts audiences of more than 11 million but at first caused critics to say he had gone soft. "There's nothing I can do about that. I'd had ten years of being told I was a bigoted, loud-mouthed, left-wing yobbo. Suddenly, it was where's his claws, where's his teeth? You can't win, so frankly, I'm the lot of them."

"I've never been any more or less angry than I am now, and I'm not remotely angry," he adds belligerently. "I was a product of my times. People forget now, it's got so kind of... boring. I suppose, politics. Not that I would wish us back to the confrontation of the Eighties."

But one senses, from the way his face lights up with evangelical zeal, that perhaps he would. "When I did my first gig Britain was three months from mass rioting," he says. "I was on live television, on Channel 4, I had a mike, these were times, you know. The only comparable thing that still makes me jump is the amount of homelessness we accept."

Now that the workers have put away their scaffolding poles, and Thatcher is long gone, Elton has turned to other targets. They are more conservative than anyone expected. The subject of *Popcorn*, his bestselling novel turned play, is Hollywood violence. An hysterical tale of a film director who meets his nemesis — two young psychopaths who claim his work led to their crimes.

It is a rollickingly funny satire — but also an attack on cynicism, which Elton cannot abide. One tends to think of him as cool, but he denies that this has ever been the case: "I have no ability to look cool. I have always known that for what is considered cool, the main prerequisite is cynicism," he says. "I've always wanted to get involved."

And, he says, to be liked — "But I'm not

going to do something I disapprove of in order to be liked." Until the press homed in, it seems he always was liked. He certainly goes to a lot of trouble to make you like him — endless consideration and self-deprecation.

He even coined the word "farty" to characterise himself. "I've been bedevilled by it," he exclaims. "Sue Lawley asked me about it. I mean, I couldn't even say the word in front of Sue Lawley. It's like saying it in front of the Queen."

Even one of his most enduring contributions to the language, the word "girlie", which originated in *The Young Ones*, was invented to avoid offence. "It wasn't pious like saying 'woman', but it wasn't demeaning like saying 'girl'. It was so silly that it wasn't patronising."

The word has been taken over by the New Lads and Laddettes. Does he shudder at Channel 4's *Girlie Show*? "I do, but I'm not going to diss other people's products in print. But you know what I feel about cynicism and trying to be fashionable for fashion's sake — a lack of content, does bedevil a lot of British broadcasting."

Some would say so does swearing, of which Elton has been a prime exponent. He is trying to kick the habit. "As my Mum once told me, it's a useful exclamation mark — not that she'd ever use it — but a pretty poor comma. If you can save it up for that special moment on stage, then you can really get a comic effect."

His audience, too, has grown up. "These days the people who come to my shows average about 30 — but there are loads with grey hair. What's funny is mates of mine come and say: 'Ben, there were loads of people with grey hair and bald patches.' And I say: 'Yeah, you.'"

Since he married his long-term girlfriend, the Australian saxophonist Sophie Gare, in 1994, he spends more nights in. "I used to go out a lot more. I've got a couple of mates who live outside London and I might go and see them, which of course I don't so much any more. We are together, and your time is more taken up. I am happily married."

There are no little Eltons as yet. "We still feel it's something we'd very much like to think about. If the time comes and the circumstances are right..."

He has always talked a lot about how "lucky" he is, but now he seems to count his blessings more than ever. For example: "Any time I've ever felt some small, 'Oh why am I being described falsely', I think of what happened to Neil Kinnock and I realise how lucky I've been."

"Of course, he talked a bit too much, but these days, looking at soundbite politics, don't you long for someone who actually loves words?" Kinnock was a friend. He doesn't really know Tony Blair.

"The Labour Party has gone to the right of me. But I'm not a zealot. I've got a lot of time for some of the things Paddy says." Ben Elton? In sympathy with the Lib Dems? Where will it all end?

● *Popcorn* opens at the Apollo Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1 on March 20

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in Britain
OPENS: Friday
REVIEW: Thursday



OPERA

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the role of Hans
Sachs as Covent
Garden revives
Die Meistersinger
OPENS: Saturday
REVIEW: Monday



POP

James bring their
big anthems to
Newport at the
outset of their
British tour
GIG: Sunday
REVIEW: Next week

ARTS
TUESDAY TO
FRIDAY
IN SECTION 2

THEATRE: Katie Mitchell's two-part mystery cycle for the RSC; and Maureen Lipman's one-woman West End show

Biblical tales for a new generation

God made man in his own image, but, if Katie Mitchell's production is to be believed, he made David Attenborough and David Belamy more in his image than anyone else.

Looking like a tumbled blend of both, David Ryall's obsessed boffin lolls on rough floorboards in his oatmeal smock, chortling with joy as he dreams up an offstage sun, moon, splashing water, earth, plants, chirruping birds and distantly honking whale. There is an anxious moment as he ponders his next move, but it passes. Prairie noises follow jungle sounds, and

The Mysteries
Other Place, Stratford

then, naked and mud-caked, on step Adam and Eve. They stand there hand-in-hand, two grave, grown-up children who meekly accept the gift of a purple flower from their beaming creator.

It is a heart-wrenching moment, and there are others to come. The two-part mystery cycle Mitchell has concocted with the writer Edward Kemp is a wonderful, unsettling mix of the curious and the spurious. For better or worse, we are denied the most famous episodes of our 15th-century forebears performed on the streets. Neither the comic *Township Shepherds' Play* nor the horribly realistic *York Crucifixion Play* has found its way onto a stage that, except for the occasional appearance of a mat or a tree festooned with paper petitions, stays bare throughout.

Instead, Kemp and Mitchell have drawn on all four surviving cycles, plus the ancient *Cornish Ordinalia*, for the clutch of episodes. Eden to Bethlehem, they call *Creation*. They have been even bolder in *Passion*, compensating with passages of pastiche Middle English for the original plays' failure to give us much of Christ's teaching. And did you know that Judas pluckily betrayed Jesus at Jesus's own bidding? Somehow I don't think Kemp and Mitchell's text will become required reading in the Bible Belt.

Ryall's God spends *Creation* padding about happily or angrily as his clones delight or dismay him. Cain coolly snaps Abel's neck, and is himself killed by blind Lamech's slingshot. Abraham, Noah and a nervous, stammering Moses

temporarily convince God that his experiment in human zoology is worthwhile, only for Death and Justice to argue that the lab should be closed down. The answer is the Incarnation: movingly evoked when Paul Hilton's Jesus, helpless and naked, curls up on the lap of Josefine Bushell-Mingo's radiant yet humble Mary.

As often with Mitchell's productions, a simple intensity rules. Her excellent 15-person cast do not pretend to be medieval workmen playing biblical figures, but wearing plain beige weave throughout, give us the figures directly and with many humanising touches. Pregnant Eve shattered by the loss of Abel and Cain. Noah, clearly no DIY freak, summoned by the need to build a 300-cubit ark and troubled by the prospect of a drowned world. Terrified Isaac, clinging to the father who was about to kill him. Joseph, often the object of gentle fun in the miracle plays, coping first with an unsought marriage, then with an inexplicable pregnancy.

There are similar moments later: a weeping woman washing Christ's feet with her hair. Lazarus emerging from his stinking winding sheet, a cured madman spinning in incredulous glee. Yet I enjoyed *Passion* rather less than *Creation*, and not because of such PC touches as the promotion of the Magdalene to top disciple.

Hilton's Jesus, though brimming with warmth and energy, is too larky in his assaults on hypocrisy and jolly. One doesn't want grim Jesus or gentle Jesus meek and mild — but maybe we need a more formidable Jesus than this rangy prankster, with his fondness for standing on his head and doing cockerel imitations to poor Peter.

Nevertheless, the point is made. The "Oil of Mercy", much mentioned in *Creation*, does its job in *Passion*: forgiveness, love, responsibility for others are preached as well as a scripturally more dubious "making the inner outer and the male and female one". God's lab animals have a fresh opportunity to prove their value. The question of whether we have done so in the last 2,000 years is, however, not within the scope of even an ersatz mystery play.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Paul Hilton as Jesus is nailed to the cross in Katie Mitchell and Edward Kemp's wonderful, unsettling mix of the curious and the spurious

Lady who lunches and tells jokes

Live & Kidding
Duchess

This is Maureen Lipman, alone on stage (with Michael Haslam on the vines) for just over two hours, singing three or four songs, performing a couple of sketches and stringing an uncountable number of jokes on an invisible thread. Three men standing at the gates of heaven jokes, an Irish actor joke, delayed train jokes, a Terry Waite joke, many Jewish mother jokes. "And did you read about Chris Eubank...?"

Most of the time it is hard to understand how one joke has prompted the next, but of course the thread that links them is not invisible at all but standing up there in a dog-rose and geranium outfit, channing easily.

focusing upon it, and my role is to be open to the experiences of an occasion.

For some years now Lipman has been a treasured speaker at lunches and brunches, so that audiences who have enjoyed her jokes there may well recognise them here. I remembered several myself, but this was because I arrived early enough to read the programme where anecdotes she would later tell are included in her autobiographical essay. This is a bad idea, reducing to zero the sense that jolly secrets are being shared with us from the stage.

Hailing from Hull, the birthplace of Andrew Marvell, she has the bright

idea of reciting the poem to his coy mistress in the dialect of the city, with a football scarf hung over her shoulders and a beerglass in hand. Recalling childhood habits of speech probably can't be called mimicry, but getting inside other people's voices is an art she manages well. Her impression of Lady "Nutmeg" Thatcher singing along with the Spice Girls passes all too swiftly.

Some bits of Joyce Grenell, a clever *Auctioneer* song, several other pleasant bits and pieces and jokes that often made me smile. Fans will be happy.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Past
meets
future

"HELLO, hello, I'm back again," said Martin Fry to an eager Empire crowd. "Now I know how Gary Glitter felt." ABC, of which Fry is now the sole original member, may be of a more recent British pop vintage than that tinselled troubadour, but they were in a way the 1980s' extension of the glam dynasty, and if Fry had continued the comparison by asking "Did you miss me?" the answer would have been a deafening affirmative.

The fact that the first ABC show of the Nineties sold out weeks in advance was rather more about unabashed nostal-

POP
ABC
Empire, W12

gia than anticipation of their return to record stores, which starts today with the single *Stranger Things* to be followed later in the month by an album, *Skyscraping*. The original group's combination of showbiz sophistication, romantic symbolism and immortal melodies gave them sound-of-an-era status in 1982, when *The Lexicon of Love* houriated in the charts for a fortnight short of a year. Their last good year at the box office was 1990, when the retrospective *Absolutely* was a Top Ten item, but proof that ABC were already the stuff of memories came the following year when *Abacadabra* was given an exceedingly early bath.

On the evidence of this comeback, Fry's careful incubation of the brand name is an object lesson in tenacity that deserves to bring fresh success. Far from setting a course for the low-rank revival circuit, he gave the group's illustrious past a renewed buff and added new sparkle with a debonair display that belied his years of absence.

Gone was the gold lame of yesterday, replaced by sober shirt and jeans, but Fry's quiff still shimmered and so, too, did a veritable ABC of hits, from *Poison Arrow* and *All of My Heart* through *Be Near Me* and *When Smokey Sings*, to a final, exultant *The Love of Love*. Of the new songs, *Stranger Things* sounded suspiciously like a hit, while *Only the Best Will Do* reeked of Roxy Music, indicative of a performer whose heart may be in the past but who hasn't finished with the future.

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Security for all of Europe

Nato enlargement is no threat to Russia, says Malcolm Rifkind

We still need Nato. Men of vision created it, and it has formed the bedrock of our security for five decades. It is our insurance policy against any serious threat to peace. Only Nato has the capacity to mount a challenging military operation, as Bosnia has shown. No single nation can respond to this sort of task: it takes an alliance, and a closely-bound one.

Why do the Central Europeans want to join Nato? They wish to feel secure, and to join the family of democratic European nations where they belong. But enlarging Nato will not just be good for them. It will be good for us too. We will be entrenching Nato's democratic values across our continent. By adding to the stability of Central Europe, we reduce the risk of our sons and daughters ever having to fight in another European war.

Already, the prospect of joining Nato is helping Central European countries to overcome ethnic and territorial disputes. And once these countries feel secure, they will have the confidence to develop better relations with Russia, enhancing everyone's security.

Clearly, accepting new members in Nato must not weaken the alliance. We must fully safeguard Nato's ability to defend its own members. We shall not compromise the principle that the security of the alliance will remain indivisible. The new members must enjoy the same security within Nato as the existing ones.

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider what would happen if Nato were not to enlarge. First, the countries of Central Europe would fear that Russia was able to reassert its hegemony over them. And we would be accepting a Russian veto on Nato's decisions. The steady, predictable strategy of enlargement that has been established for three years would be halted in its tracks, creating once again a line down the middle of the map of Europe. We must tear down the old from Curtains, not rust-proof and repaint it.

Secondly, if left outside Nato, the Central Europeans would have to make their own national security arrangements, which would divert much-needed money to a dangerous arms race. New regional alliances might spring up. There could be new tremors along old fault-lines.

Not all countries wishing to join Nato will be invited at the alliance's Madrid summit in July to do so. But Nato's door will not close on them. Enlargement is an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe. It is a process that must enhance the security of all. Nato will develop a dynamic partnership with countries to its east for practical co-operation and political consultation. I hope that Nato can formalise a new relationship with Ukraine, a partner vital to Europe's stability.

Neither the new Nato nor its expansion poses a threat to Russia. To deepen the security of all of Europe, all of Europe needs to be involved. And no European country is more important to European security than Russia. Its size and importance demand that we treat Russia as a full partner. Russia's relationship with Nato is as important to peace in Europe as Nato's enlargement.

I have seen it argued, in this newspaper and elsewhere, that enlarging Nato will inflame nationalist and militaristic sentiments in Russia. I do not share that view. Russia's security will be stronger if its neighbours are secure and stable.

Russia has much to gain from change in Nato. The Nato of today and tomorrow is not the Nato of old. The alliance has no plans, no intention and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members. Nato will offer Russia practical co-operation and unprecedented consultation. I am confident that a deal will be struck this summer between Nato and Russia to create a new strategic partnership.

To make the whole of Europe as peaceful and secure as Western Europe, we need to extend Nato's assurances and habits of trust. Nato is on course to do this through its enlargement, by establishing new relationships with Russia and Ukraine, and by strengthening co-operation with all of our partners to the east. If we involve all Europe in Europe's security, we can entrench freedom and trust for us all.

The author is Foreign Secretary. He will be speaking on this subject today in Washington.

Most of the proposed constitutional changes are inconclusive. No one knows where they would lead

Labour is going to sea in a sieve

William Rees-Mogg

described as "first past the parish pump", but is favoured by the Liberal Democrats. Each system has its advantages and disadvantages, though proportional systems tend to encourage the development of extreme parties, and to reduce the independence of individual members. New Labour would hardly have been possible in a fully proportional system, which is perhaps why Robin Cook supports such a system and Tony Blair does not.

For the Conservatives, a proportional system could be more attractive than they imagine; apart from Europe, there are no issues likely to split the Conservative Party. Take away Europe, and

Kenneth Clarke and John Redwood hold entirely compatible but not identical views. The Labour Party is a coalition of old and new Labour. In a proportional system it would inevitably have become two parties in the 1950s, as it would in the 1980s and probably in the 1990s. If proportional representation resulted in there being a single Conservative Party, a Liberal Democrat Party, a social democrat party (new Labour) and a socialist party (old Labour), it would probably be favourable to the Tories. It would also be good for the Liberals, who would usually be junior partners in either a Right-Centre or a Left-Centre coalition, although a coalition between Conservatives and social democrats might work better than one between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats.

Proportional representation is always unattractive to any radical politician, as it was to Margaret Thatcher, it gives the Centre a veto on change. It is an anti-radical brake, which I remember supporting in the 1970s when there seemed to be a risk of a radical socialist government. After 1988, the Gaullists in France abolished proportional representation and replaced it with the present French Constitution. If the next Parliament changes Britain's electoral system, that is likely to be the first change rather than the last.

Even the Labour Party admits that its proposed reform of the House of Lords, by abolishing the hereditary peers, is

only an interim measure. It would leave the Lords a wholly appointed revising chamber of life peers, an extreme super-quango. That would be entirely undemocratic and not very efficient. Life peers have no constituencies to keep them answerable, or to keep them informed. They tend to be appointed as a sort of retirement, and their average age is high. Indeed the only very young peers are hereditary ones. If life peers are in touch with the experience of younger people, it is usually only through their children or grandchildren. No one would design such a body, and no one has produced an intelligent defence for it.

Each of the constitutional reforms proposed by the Labour Party would therefore be the beginning and not the end of a process of change. Will Scotland become independent? If Scotland stays in the United Kingdom, how can a Scottish parliament be reconciled with the Westminster Parliament, or with the position of Wales and the English regions? Should we change the British electoral system? If so, how? What sort of Upper House would work best? These are all constitutional questions which Labour will be able to open, but not to close. The effect may be rather like that of the more necessary 1832 Reform Act, which raised issues which, if one includes votes for women, took a hundred years to settle.

Above all, there is the constitutional issue of Europe. If the Labour government does take Britain further towards membership of a European superstate, it will unite the Conservatives in a much tougher Euroscepticism. The further Labour takes Britain in, the more likely the Tories will be to want to take Britain out. The nation will be polarised on the European issue, and public opinion is already moving in a Eurosceptical direction. Since women were given the vote, Britain has not seen rioting in the streets over constitutional issues. New Labour may live to regret setting out to sea in this particular sieve.

Well done, Prime Minister

Peter Riddell says John Major's achievements should not be forgotten in defeat

All long-serving governments end in tears. In the struggle for personal survival and for advantage in opposition, fractiousness and recrimination distort perspective. Achievements are ignored and leaders are criticised for defeats which probably could not have been avoided. That happened in 1905 and 1964 to the Tories, and to Labour in 1951, and is occurring again now after 18 years of Conservative rule, and nearly 6½ years with John Major as Prime Minister. But instead of blaming Mr Major, Tories should praise him for extending their period in office. The Major years will be seen by historians as not a dismal aftermath to the allegedly golden Thatcher era, but rather as a crucial period when Thatcherism was taken further and entrenched.

Mr Major should be a hero in the Thatcherite pantheon, not the villain he is portrayed as by the likes of Alistair McAlpine and George Galloway, both now part of the disillusioned band who have signed up for Sir James Goldsmith's experiment in fantasy politics. For the true believers who have never reconciled themselves to her fall, Margaret Thatcher was everything and Mr Major is nothing, a weak man who has betrayed her legacy. McAlpine's waspish and ultimately rather sad memoirs show that he never really understood politics. He was a creature of the salon and the saleroom rather than the seminar.

Like many Thatcher courtiers, he was fixated by her and could never appreciate the contribution of the other main architects of Thatcherism: Geoffrey Howe, Norman Tebbit and Nigel Lawson. Her falling out with them in the second half of the 1980s was wholly different from her earlier routing of the patrician "wets" that established her ascendancy. But courtiers like McAlpine



RIDDELL ON MONDAY

saw both groups as traitors. They could never understand that all politicians are mortal, and that by the end of the 1980s it was time for her to go. She had made her immense contribution to changing the direction of Britain, and by then had lost touch. The survival of Thatcherism required a new leader.

The Tories would, I believe, have lost their majority in a general election in 1991-92 if Mrs Thatcher had remained Prime Minister. Of course, many voters would have still been hostile to Neil Kinnock and sceptical about Labour's tax and spending plans. But that would have been offset by Mrs Thatcher's personal unpopularity and her resistance to scrapping the poll tax. As my colleague Michael Gove recently wrote in *The Times Literary Supplement*, Michael Heseltine's challenge to Mrs Thatcher made a fourth Conserva-

tive term possible and "like Bonaparte, Heseltine saved the revolution from itself".

By contrast with Margaret Thatcher, Mr Major appeared as a healer and a unifier, a fresh face at the head of a new Government. That freshness soon disappeared, particularly after sterling's forced exit from the European exchange rate mechanism, but the victory of April 1992 has given the Tories five years in office that they would otherwise not have had. So obsessed are many Tories with Europe that they forget what else has happened. Privatisation has been extended; long overdue changes in the running of public services have been introduced; the Citizen's Charter and performance tables have increased pressure to im-

prove standards; attempts have been made to control the growth in the social security budget and to help or push those on benefits back into work; and macro-economic policy has been put on a more sensible and open basis. This has all been done despite many mistakes, some of which date back to the rows at the end of the Thatcher era, and some of which reflect Mr Major's willingness to raise public spending in the 1987-92 period. Nonetheless, overall, the Major years have seen the completion and development of the Thatcherite programme, as well as reforms in the public sector which have been more radical than she contemplated.

But the crucial result of Mr Major's premiership, and especially his victory in April 1992, has been the acceptance of much of this by Labour. Even though Mr Kinnock's now underappreciated

policy reviews of the late 1980s had jettisoned many of the party's past commitments, ambiguities remained, particularly over the unions and public services. Tony Blair recognised at the time that Labour had not changed enough. Over the past five years, the Labour leadership has broadly accepted a free-market approach and tight public spending and tax constraints. Privatisation and the union laws of the 1980s will not be reversed.

There are, of course, many questions about how genuine and deep is "new" Labour's commitment to these policies. Many of its instincts favour state solutions, as shown by the stridently negative initial reaction to Peter Lilley's pension proposals last week. Labour is still cool on real choice in education and favours centrally directed initiatives to improve standards. Even in its cautious Blairite form, Labour would be more than just the human face of Thatcherism. Its priorities would be different — for instance, on helping the long-term and young unemployed. But a Blair government would operate within, and largely accept, an economic framework and limits on government created in the Thatcher and Major years.

Yet if Mr Major has ensured that the Thatcher legacy in economic and social policy will be lasting, he has had to cope with its political contradictions. By temperament as well as circumstance, he has never been able to master the deep divisions within his party over Europe. All he has been able to do is to manoeuvre to keep his Government and party more or less intact, to the satisfaction of few. Mr Major has also been slow to understand the worries about abuse of power raised by one party being in office for so long. And when he has tried to provide reassurance, as for instance through the appointment of the Nolan inquiry, he has annoyed his own side.

A real Conservative would appreciate that no party, and no prime minister, can remain in office for ever. I do not agree with those who believe a period in opposition will do the Tories good. Just ask any Labour MP. Opposition is likely to be disagreeable and divisive. But defeat should be accepted as having probably been inevitable, whoever had been party leader. Instead of vilifying Mr Major, the Tory party should recognise how much he has done for it.

Closing ranks

LONDON'S taxi drivers are preparing to sabotage the Prime Minister. This morning he will be answering questions on Scott Chisholm's show on Talk Radio, a station devoted to phone-ins and endless windbagery, and a favourite of the "You'll never guess who I had in the back of my cab" school.

The black cab drivers, however, are ganging up to clog the switchboards with questions about the problem of minicabs testing round London, which they feel is undermining their business. Posters have gone up in certain areas urging Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, to impose restrictions on minicabs or resign.

The Prime Minister's appearance on what cabbies regard as their station offers them the chance to get a decent answer to their question, and never mind Europe, taxes or any other issue.

Talk Radio, however, is prepared. "We have been recording questions, names and phone numbers for three days," says a spokesman. "When there are lots of calls from the same number we ignore them. If anyone gets on air asking the same questions, we'll just cut

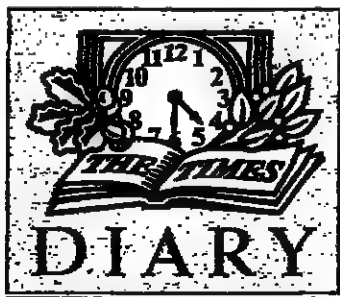
them off. We know how to stop this sort of thing."

Downing Street is also ready for the cabbies' charge. "The Prime Minister is fully briefed on all the questions he is likely to be asked — minicab towing included."

Channel 4's addition to controversy continues with negotiations to make a film adaptation of *The*



"Thank God, I was worried he might join us"



Big Kiss, a vicious first novel by David Higgins, son of the Sherlock Holmes actor Jeremy Brett. The book's greatest claim to literary distinction is winning last year's Bad Sex Prize, handed out by Auberon Waugh's notoriously unsexy Literary Review, for a bedroom scene of blanket-kicking awfulness.

G SWIZZ

PITY Brad Irwin and Suzanne Troy of Denver, Colorado, who have seen their wedding plans steamroller by the Group of Seven world leaders. Irwin and Miss Troy put down a \$1,000 deposit last October to wed on June 21 in the atrium of the Denver Museum of Natural History, with its impressive views over the Rocky

Mountains. Unfortunately, the G7 has decided to hold its annual summit in the museum, and for some reason, the leaders of Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Italy and the United States take precedence.

The museum offered the couple an alternative date, but caterers and photographers had been booked and printed invitations have already gone out for that day. Irwin thinks he may have a solution. "If the President's in Denver," he says, "then how about we use the White House?" He awaits a reply.

No support

GOOD and bad news for Tony Blair. The good news is that Bernard Manning is no fan. "His party appears to dictate to him," says the comedian in this month's *Esquire*. "John Prescott seems to be working him with his foot like a dummy. I shouldn't think he'd make a good Prime Minister: you need someone like Churchill or Enoch Powell."

The bad news is that Irvine Welsh, author of *Trainspotting* and, one would have imagined, a natural Labour supporter, is no fan either. "Blair has the same policies as John Major," he says, "so he'll

make the same kind of Prime Minister. Stylistically, he'll probably be more slick and smarmy."

Tim Henman has turned up in California sporting a tattoo on his right bicep. He is photographed here practising for this week's *Newsweek* Champions Cup. The tattoo depicts a punkish cartoon character. Fans are concerned that Henman is showing disturbing Andre Agassi tendencies with this venture into body decoration, but they hope it will be gone by Wimbledon.



Henman: new tattoo

Strip-off

FOREST, the Freedom Organisation for the Right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco, has been borrowing some sensationalist advertising techniques from the anti-fur campaigners.

The group, whose supporters include Lord Deedes, Neil Hamilton, MP, and Norman Stone, have sent out a picture of a man and woman, naked, kneeling and covering their modesty with their hands. Their slogan is "Don't let smokers be stripped of their rights".

Still rolling

KATE MOSS, the model, appears to have a new walker. She has been spending a conspicuous amount of time during her recent trips to London with Tarka "The Otter" Campbell, a young Scottish aristocrat and a resident of Notting Hill Gate. Campbell, who is in his late twenties and of independent means, runs with a fast set which includes Lord and Lady Durham and gaggles of junior Pakenhams, led by the barrister Orlando Fraser, the son of Lady Antonia.



Kate: Depp-privation

All of which leaves the question of Johnny Depp, the film star, to whom Miss Moss has been publicly attached for the past couple of years. Depp has a reputation for smashing up hotel rooms when jealous. Campbell, reassuringly, is said not to be the sort to duck when the make-up pots start flying.

P.H.S



THE POOR RELATION

Primary education deserves more attention — and money

The first seven years of a child's education are more important than any others. In this time they are taught the literacy and numeracy from which all further studies follow. They learn the discipline, independence and respect for others which are vital for adjustment to secondary school. A good primary school can set children up for life; a bad one can blight their chances.

From tomorrow, when we publish the first league tables of primary school results, parents will be able to rely on more than word of mouth in choosing the right school for their young children. All this week, *The Times* will be concentrating on primary education, state and private, with advice on which characteristics to look for in a good school, how to interpret the league tables, and how the tests work.

Tomorrow's tables are not perfect: like all rankings, particularly at their inception, they are open to criticism. They do not measure the improvement a school has wrought on its pupils. Until the five-year-old tests have been up and running for six years, it will be difficult to assess the "value added" by a school. But they do show that schools with similar intakes can produce wildly different results. This information may be embarrassing to teachers, but it is very useful to parents.

Although the national results in English and maths show a ten-point improvement on last year, they are still unimpressive. Only 55.57 per cent of 11-year-olds reached the expected levels. These are not average levels; they are the standards that all 11-year-olds without special educational needs should be able to achieve. In the worst schools, some 11-year-olds are four or five years behind in reading, writing and arithmetic. No other Western country has such a large number trailing so far at this stage.

The result is that too many children enter secondary school unable to cope with the academic demands made upon them. If they have a reading age of seven, they cannot

keep up with the lessons. Alienated by their surroundings, they are naturally tempted to play truant and turn to crime. The most important task for the next government will be to address this educational dip that occurs between the age of seven — when the vast majority of children are achieving good standards — and 11, by which age many have fallen behind.

In these later years of primary school, ten subjects are on the national curriculum. Yet one class teacher is expected to teach them all. In private schools, children usually have the same teacher for all subjects until they are about eight; then they are taught by specialists. Such an approach has generally been resisted by state schools, but there is much to commend it, particularly in technical subjects such as maths, science and information technology.

The other necessary reform is for pupils of roughly the same ability to be taught together. Good primary schools already group children by ability, either within the class or, if the school is big enough, in different streams. A less rigid attachment to chronological age would help even more. If brighter children were allowed to move up the school faster and those who were struggling could learn with younger children, teachers would no longer have to deal with an unmanageably wide range of ability in one classroom. The aim should be to ensure that no normal child left primary school without the basic skills needed to cope with the next stage of education.

Not all these reforms, however, are costless. There are not enough specialist teachers, for instance, in maths and science. If a new government were to give primary education the attention that it deserved, it might question why only £2,053 a year is spent on each pupil compared with £2,728 on those in secondary schools. The spotlight has now been shone on the early years of education; perhaps it is time for a reordering of financial priorities too.

SCOTTISH QUESTIONS

Supporters of devolution must come up with some answers

The success of the Scottish Labour Party conference, with Tony Blair enjoying an enthusiastic reception and victory in internal battles, masks deeper problems for the party in what should be its heartland. Those problems are not insuperable, but they will require harder thinking and straighter talking than the party has so far been prepared to embrace.

As our election guide today shows, Labour's plans to set up a parliament in Edinburgh reflect majority opinion in Scotland; and the party's Scottish MPs have been sincere in trying to create an assembly which can command cross-party support within Scotland. Their proposals, however, while conceived in hope are flawed in execution. They take insufficient account of Scotland's relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom and could place a strain on the Union they are intended to save. If devolution is to work and the potential of decentralisation is to be harnessed, Labour will have to risk the wrath of its nationalist wing to find the right solutions.

It may be that support for self-government changes with a change of government. A great deal of the momentum for constitutional change springs from frustration that Scotland has sent a Labour majority to Westminster and been governed by Conservative ministers. The Government has been blamed by Scots for industrial decline and insensitive administration, not least the early introduction of the poll tax.

Much of the anger is misplaced. Scotland's traditional smokestack industries could not have survived the pace of global economic change and the Scottish economy, thanks to Tory reforms and an impressive inward investment record, is in good heart. The poll tax was implemented early in Scotland not because of thoughtlessness but a desire by ministers to spare Scots the pain of a difficult rates revaluation. If Scotland

was a guinea-pig, it was a pampered one. Nevertheless, the demand for autonomy is real. The Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, deserves credit for trying to satisfy it within current constitutional structures by imaginative gestures and an activist administrative posture. Scots voters are still likely to vote for more. Labour should not assume, however, that victory at the polls would be a licence to legislate for its current scheme.

The first flaw lies in Labour's referendum plan. Scots are being invited to make too large a leap in the dark, being asked to vote on the principle of devolution before a Bill has gone through Parliament. The second weakness is Labour's refusal satisfactorily to answer the West Lothian question. Why should Scots MPs be able to vote on education in England when English MPs have no say in Scotland?

It is true, as Labour points out, that Ulster MPs enjoyed that right during the lifetime of Stormont. But while Stormont existed, Ulster's representation at Westminster was reduced. If Labour insists, as it does at present, on keeping Scotland's 72 seats at Westminster then the English, understandably, will have cause for resentment. If Labour had a majority of English MPs that would take some sting out of the question but it would not resolve the matter.

There are other potential pitfalls. Once a Scottish parliament were set up, the role of the Scottish Secretary in the UK Cabinet would be, at best, marginal. Scotland's voice within the UK would be less strong. The tax-varying powers promised could call into question the current generous level of Exchequer grant. They are, however, not nearly large enough to satisfy nationalist complaints that Scotland's grievances could be better addressed with greater fiscal freedom. Those who sincerely want devolution to work have a duty to ensure that these genuine concerns are addressed.

PUTTING LEFT TO RIGHTS

A new era is at hand for the southpaw

Thanks to the Wykehamist ingenuity of the musician Christopher Seed, pianos can now be tailored for the left-handed. Until now, the left hand has been the honest manual labourer on the keyboard, relegated to dull repetitive work while the right enjoys artisan status, given delicate melodies to construct. Mr Seed, after a few happy hours playing with his electronic organ, was able, as it were, to put the boot on the other hand and reverse the structure of the keyboard. The resulting liberation of the left-handed pianist is not only a boon to many hitherto handicapped musicians; it is also a symbolic blow for digital equality.

It is unfashionable now, especially in Labour circles, to lean to the left, but a preference for the wrong paw has been the mark of creative geniuses from Michelangelo to McCartney. Whichever side of the brain governs the rational and whichever the emotional, the accumulated evidence of the past points to a concentration of talent among the minority who are unambiguously left-handed.

In the past, southpaws had to endure vilification as poisonous as any meted out to a minority. In medieval villages, left-handers were suspected of supping with

Satan and prejudices did not die with the unfortunate victims at the stake. As late as Queen Victoria's reign, left-handed children had to have their disability "corrected" by being forced to write with what the authorities considered to be, in every sense, the right hand.

Left-handers have only recently found themselves treated on terms of rough equality and, as with so many minorities, it is the market rather than any ideology which has been their truest liberator. Canny capitalists have opened new vistas as well as wine bottles for the left-handed, producing products from corkscrews to guitars designed to break down barriers for the sinister.

Mr Seed's latest invention is, however, of a different order from many of the gadgets which have gone before. The fruit of his labour will allow the fiercest arpeggios of especially demanding composers to fall in the range of many players who until now were, like David Evans, MP, too clumsily heavy-handed on the right. For left-handed pianists, the invention promises, as with the advent of the credit card, a Chopin revolution. It is an advance that, whichever hand one claps with, deserves enthusiastic applause.

Laird scored two.

Doctors' worry on bugged surgeries

From the Chairman of the General Medical Services Committee, BMA, and others

Sir, The concerns expressed in our letter of January 20 about the threat to patient confidentiality posed by the Police Bill remain unaltered.

The maintenance of confidentiality lies at the heart of medical practice. A doctor can be removed from the medical register for a breach of confidentiality; indeed the Law Commission recommended in 1981 that a breach of confidence be made a statutory offence. Yet, under the agreement on the Bill between the Government and the Opposition, prior approval from a commissioner — a High Court judge appointed by the Prime Minister — will not be necessary before the police can carry out covert surveillance or "bugging" of a doctor's surgery or hospital ward in "urgent cases". The police can listen in and then seek retrospective approval from the commissioner.

We believe that the decision to violate the confidentiality of the very personal information that patients communicate to a doctor should only be made by a High Court judge, who has no vested interest in "getting a result". The police are already obliged to seek the assistance of the doctor or the authority of a circuit judge before they can have access to a patient's medical notes. The same protection should be given to the conversations between patient and doctor which inform the patient's medical record.

In those rare cases where it is the doctor who is suspected of abusing his or her professional position and engaging in serious criminal activity, we believe that it should be for an independent judge to weigh the public interest in the enforcement of the criminal law and in the maintenance of the trust patients have in their doctors.

Yours faithfully,
IAN G. BOGLE,
Chairman,
General Medical Services
Committee, BMA.
NORMAN BROWSE
(Chairman, Joint Consultants Committee),
JAMES N. JOHNSON
(Chairman, Central Consultants and Specialists Committee, BMA),
A. W. MACARA
(Chairman of Council, BMA),
NAREN PATEL
(Chairman, Academy of Royal Colleges),
KEITH PETERS
(Chairman, Council of Deans of UK Medical Schools and Faculties),
LESLIE TURNBERG
(Chairman, Specialist Training Authority),
British Medical Association,
Tavistock Square, WC1.
March 4.

Planning 'propriety'

From Dr Richard Fordham

Sir, I would like to support the President of the Royal Town Planning Institute (letter, March 6) in his criticism of Mr John Gummer's belief that local planning decisions on sites for social housing are being determined more by political and electoral considerations than planning ones.

We are the main firm carrying out housing needs surveys for councils, and in the related field of negotiating social housing from developers. We have worked for about a quarter of the councils in England and Wales and would say that councils act pretty diligently in planning for housing sites on which they then negotiate social housing wherever possible.

The main recent problem has been the government advice for which Mr Gummer, as Secretary of State for the Environment, is responsible. This defines logic by including low-cost market-priced housing in the definition of affordable social housing and also encourages developers to buy out of their obligation to provide social housing. Both these actions reduce the scope of councils to respond directly to housing needs.

The inclusion of low-cost market housing in the definition of affordable social housing was, I have been told, a political decision by ministers. In my opinion it comes far closer to impropriety than anything I have witnessed from councils.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD FORDHAM
(Managing Director),
Fordham Research Services,
99 Talbot Road, W11.
March 7.

Rules of cohabitation

From Mr Hugh G. Meehan

Sir, Lord Rees-Mogg states (article, March 6) that "The implication of a preference for cohabitation over marriage is that there is an unwillingness of one partner or the other, or both, to commit to permanence". For myself and my partner, and I am sure many others, this is not correct.

Our choice not to get married is because we do not see it as necessary to involve the State in our commitment to each other. It should not be necessary to have "absolute rules" imposed by the State to ensure that we stay together.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH G. MEEHAN,
100 Bishops Park,
Mid Calder, West Lothian.
March 6.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.
Men: Priest for the winner.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Fairer spending on schooling for all

From the Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment

Sir, Margot Norman (article, March 1) is wrong both in her analysis of the costs and relative benefits of assisted places and in her view that this is the only way in which bridges can be built between the independent and state sectors.

Labour's proposal is to phase out, not to abolish, the scheme. We will provide no new places after this September. The £161 million saved will pay for our plan to reduce class sizes to 30 or under for half a million five, six and seven-year-olds currently in larger classes. This has been costed independently by the National Foundation for Educational Research at £68 million.

Labour does not accept the assessment cited by Ms Norman, which was commissioned by the independent schools and erroneously assumed that the marginal cost of educating the 6,000 pupils a year who might otherwise have gone on assisted places would be the same as the average cost. It is not, as the present Government, which has accommodated 318,000 extra state pupils over the last three years with no extra grant, could testify.

The best way to improve standards for all is both through a major improvement in the basics in primary school and the development of specialisms and the grouping of pupils by subject ability in secondary school. Labour has put forward clear proposals in this regard. I do also as Ms Norman mentions, favour partnerships with independent schools, both encouraging greater co-operation with state schools — and supporting facilities which are not available in the state sector, such as those in special or choir schools.

However, given that we have limited resources available for education, I do not believe it is justifiable to continue rapidly expanding assisted places which benefit such a limited number of youngsters instead of improving standards for seven million state pupils.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BLUNKETT,
House of Commons,
March 3.

From the Executive Secretary of the Campaign for State Education

Sir, Margot Norman paints a very emotive picture of parents condemned to keeping their bright children in state education if money is diverted from the Assisted Places Scheme. I could use selective quotes too — from parents happy with their bright child's achievements at neighbouring comprehensive.

Surely other issues should be addressed. In comparison with other countries this country does least well by its less able children. As a result both the economic prospects of the country and the children themselves suffer.

The Government's current spending estimate of £118 million of public money on assisted places in around 300 private schools compares very unfavourably with their spending of £5 million on the much needed literacy and numeracy centres. Currently more than 28 per cent of our children in the 19,000 primary schools are in classes over 30. We have to get our priorities right.

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET TULLOCH,
Executive Secretary,
Campaign for State Education,
158 Durham Road, SW20.
March 4.

Sentencing of persistent burglars

From Baroness Blatch, Minister of State, Home Office

Sir, In my letter of February 19 on the Crime (Sentences) Bill I pointed out that there is very little progression in the sentencing of persistent burglars. The figures I gave were 16.2 months on first conviction, 18.9 months on a third or more conviction and 19.4 months on a seventh or more conviction.

Lord Ackner (letter, February 24) disputes these figures, on the grounds that they cover a sample of "only" 949 burglars (out of a total of 78,300 sentenced in those two years) and relate to a period when the courts were precluded from taking previous convictions into account when passing sentence.

However, figures based on a sample from convictions in 1994, by which time the courts were able to take previous convictions into account, show exactly the same pattern: average sentences of 15 months on first conviction and only 19 months on a third or more conviction. A complete analysis of all convictions in 1994 confirms the pattern.

The fact is that, however the figures are analysed, there is no evidence of any significant progression in sentencing for repeat burglars. That is why the Bill will require the courts to impose a minimum sentence of not less

than three years on third or subsequent conviction.

The Director of Justice, in her letter accompanying Lord Ackner's, argues that mandatory sentences will result in more contested trials, and "plea bargains" between the prosecution and the defence. The answer to the first point is that the Bill allows the court to reduce mandatory sentences by up to 20 per cent to take account of timely guilty pleas, thus providing an incentive for those who are guilty to plead guilty.

The second point, frankly, is no more than scaremongering: I do not believe for a moment that the Crown Prosecution Service would be party to "circumventing mandatory sentences" as she suggests.

Finally, Sir Frederick Lawton (also on the same page) asks what constitutes "exceptional circumstances" for the purpose of the discretion that judges will have to set aside mandatory penalties. That will be a matter for the courts themselves to determine in all the circumstances of the particular case — as it is already in relation to the power to impose a suspended sentence of imprisonment.

Yours sincerely,
EMILY BLATCH,
Home Office,
Queen Anne's Gate, SW1.
February 26.

Benefits of Europe

From the Chairman of the European Movement — United Kingdom

Sir, Yesterday the European Movement launched Europe 97, a major information campaign to give British people facts about the benefits of Britain's EU membership.

The campaign details 97 reasons to be in Europe, ranging from the expansion in trade with Europe to examples of companies which have done well out of the single market. It will show that our membership of the EU has led to improved environmental standards and helped to secure the longest unbroken period of peace in Europe

for 300 years: British business is more successful, British people are better off, and Britain is a more influential nation in the world because Britain is a member of the European Union.

The campaign is financed with a grant of £150,000 from the European Commission and £100,000 from British business and is receiving support from trade unions and representatives of all political parties.

Yours sincerely,
GILES RADICE, Chairman,
European Movement —
United Kingdom,
Dean Bradley House,
52 Horseferry Road, SW1.
March 7.

Library example

From Mr Walter Corbett

Sir, One evening last week I was shown round the glittering new Centre Ulisse in the little town of Lamalou-les-Bains, in the South of France. On the roof, an array of satellite dishes, and beneath it, rooms full of computers, a "library" packed with CD-Roms, and a computer-equipped lecture theatre.

Membership of the "library" costs 50 francs (£5.50) a year; use of a computer to access the Internet, 45 francs an hour. There are classes in computer literacy for young and old. Local businesses, hospitals and professional people can use video-conferencing facilities to access clients, or expert opinion, worldwide.

Lamalou and its two neighbouring townships together boast a population a little over 10,000. Contributions towards the cost of the building and equipping of the centre (in round figures) came from the townships (£1 million), local and regional authorities (£2 million), local industry and hospitals (£1.5 million) and *L'Europe* (£2.5 million).

Are we missing something?
Yours faithfully,
WALTER CORBETT,
17 The Green, Newick, East Sussex.
March 4.

'Kitchen slavery'

From Mrs Philippa Grace

Sir, According to Catherine Cronin (report, March 7), modern labour-saving devices have left women spending just as long in the kitchen as their mothers or grandmothers.

What she appears not to recognise is that the early machine efficiency in the kitchen raised standards without the need for domestic helpers (family or paid). It was a long time before many businesses became so efficient.

The woman may now be so busy earning money that she does not have time to encourage her family to help with the chores; but to say, as your headline did, that she has been "tricked" into kitchen slavery by all mod cons (later editions) is ridiculous. One member of a family of six, with a dishwasher, can clear up a meal alone, without making the others feel guilty; and if the older children cannot use a washing machine, they will have problems when they leave home.

Many mothers of young children now have time for at least part-time work, which would have been impossible without outside help before the advent of machines in the home.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIPPA GRACE,
15 Blandford Avenue, Oxford.
March 7.

Society safe from same fate as Dolly

From Professor Stephen G. Hillier

Sir, I applaud the vein of sound common sense running through your leading article ("Double trouble", February 27; see also letters, February 28); it was an oasis of reason in the sensational media response to the Roslin group's announcement of the cloning of Dolly.

Whether or not (the latter I suspect) the precise cloning procedure used falls within the letter of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990) it most certainly falls within its spirit. A strength of that legislation lies in the flexibility that empowers the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) to act on contentious issues such as this (assuming it could actually work for humans).

Even if the Roslin procedure does fall outside the Act, the HFEA has a code of practice against which the application of such a procedure to create a human being would currently be judged completely unacceptable. Without a treatment licence issued by the authority, it would be illegal.

This pragmatic way of dealing with sensational new problems not envisaged by the Act, as drafted, has been deployed to good effect since it became law. Witness the authority's stance on sex selection and the use of foetal or cadaveric ovarian tissue for infertility treatment, both of which are banned.

In this way the UK leads the world in handling the morally and socially — let alone medically — disturbing issues that continue to come at a pace in the wake of the revolution in our new understanding of the science of reproduction and genetics. Whether and how this knowledge should be used is for society to decide.

The essence of a civilised society is knowledge, not ignorance. That is the power of scientific research.

Yours faithfully,
S. G. HILLIER
(Member, HFEA, 1990-96),
University of Edinburgh,
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology,
37 Chalmers Street, Edinburgh.

From the Editor of the Bulletin of Medical Ethics

Sir, Reports of the creation of Dolly the lamb by cloning an adult sheep cell have rightly led to worldwide concern and discussion. One voice, however, has been absent that of the Home Office. The Home Secretary has yet to explain why he was content, a couple of years ago, to issue a project licence, as required by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, for the work that was designed to lead to Dolly's creation.

The enormous public concern was as predictable then as now, so why was no attempt made to test public opinion with a wide consultation before granting the licence?

Yours sincerely,
R. H. NICHOLSON, Editor,
Bulletin of Medical Ethics,
31 Corsica Street, NS,
March 1.

Politics of hope

From Mr Bernard Kauras

Sir, Mr Nicolas Walter of the Rationalist Press Association (letter, March 5) boldly, and wrongly, claims that our most precious values — including liberty, equality and fraternity — arose before or outside or after the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

The consequences of two and a half decades of French slaughter and rapine over the whole of Europe in the name of those three "secular" values need no gloss added; nor does the count of 40 million Russians destroyed by Lenin and Stalin under the same banner.

What is odd about his assertion is that liberty, equality and fraternity ("love one another" embraces all three) is exactly what Christ preached to all who would hear Him. The fact that they have not yet been realised worldwide does not in any way demean His teaching.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD KAURAS,
13 Lynwood Road, Ealing, W5.
March 6.

It's all relatives

From Mr Peter S. Dewar

Sir, I note from your front page today that "A history teacher at a Somerset school discovered yesterday that he had a Stone Age ancestor who lived 9,000 years ago".

So did I... and so did everybody else.

Yours faithfully,
PETER S. DEWAR,
7 Colifton Court,
31 Cumberland Road, Bromley, Kent.
March 8.

Stops and starts

From Mr Graham Ramsay

Sir, I can understand Tom Courtney's alarm on being told that his train would terminate at its destination (letters, February 22 and 25). I am sure that he will sympathise with mine on being informed, a year or two back, that "the station now rapidly approaching is Swindon".

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM RAMSAY,
33 Howe Street, Edinburgh.
March 6.

OBITUARIES

BRIGADIER ANTHONY HARPER

Brigadier Anthony Harper, CBE, former British military attaché in Moscow, died on February 21 aged 80. He was born on July 17, 1916.

Tony Harper was on the front pages of newspapers throughout the world 30 years ago when, while serving as Britain's military attaché in Moscow, he was kidnapped and beaten up by the KGB. It happened in November 1967 during a visit by Harper and his American counterpart Colonel William Spahr to a wine-making plant near Kishinev, Moldavia. In the company of their guide from Intourist, they sampled a selection of the plant's products before returning to their hotel. There both men were taken violently ill.

While they were incapacitated six "heavies" from the Soviet secret police burst in. They forcibly held down the two men, strip-searched them and seized their notebooks and several rolls of film.

The incident provoked strong protests from Washington and the Foreign Office which described it as a "serious breach of diplomatic immunity". Nor did the Russians help matters by responding with a counter-claim. They accused the two Westerners of being drunk and disorderly, insisting the Intourist officials had helped them to their room where they had made such a disturbance that the hotel manager had had to call the police. Torn curtains and a glass ashtray — smashed when the KGB had broken in — were produced by the Soviet authorities to support their case. They said that the damage had been caused by Spahr and Harper.

But subsequent medical examinations produced evidence that the diplomats had been served with tampered drinks — "Mickey Flinn", once a stock in trade of thriller writers. The Russians, it emerged, had been searching for evidence of dealings with Soviet dissidents.

But their masters in Washington and Whitehall cleared the two men of acting in any way improperly and, perhaps significantly, the Russians allowed them to complete their tours of duty, without declaring either of them *persona non grata*. The KGB, it was assumed, had blundered.

Harper, who took some time to recover from the drugs he had unwittingly imbibed, was perhaps sustained



throughout the crisis by the military antecedents in his family.

Born in London, Charles Anthony des Noctes Harper was the son of a general practitioner who had served as an army doctor in the First World War, and the great-grandson of General Lefebvre des Noctes, one of Napoleon's field commanders at Waterloo — and related to the Emperor by marriage. Captured by Wellington's men, he was transported across the Channel and detained in Britain as a prisoner of war.

Harper went to St Edward's School, Oxford, and thence to the Royal Veterinary College. But his studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war.

Commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1940, he spent the next four years in this country, initially with a mountain battery in Scotland, training with horses and mules for operations in Norway and Iceland. Harper won a C-in-C Home Forces Certificate for gallantry and good conduct in 1943 when he dived into the flooded River Spey to rescue a groom who had fallen in and been swept away during an exercise.

He also alarmed his colleagues while on location in Iceland when he drove a tent-pole into a glacier crevice. There followed a discernible tremor and a loud roar as the ice around them moved a fraction of an inch. Harper served in the latter stages of the

campaign in North West Europe, as a gunnery staff officer with 12 Corps. Then, after the war, he took the decision to sign on.

Much of Harper's subsequent career was to be spent as a staff officer, with several tours of duty in the Far East. These included one as controller of the household to Britain's Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, between 1951 and 1953. He became a great admirer of MacDonald, the son of the first Labour Prime Minister, and the two men remained friends until MacDonald's death.

He was military attaché in Moscow, 1966-68, once hosting a tea party for the Foreign Secretary, George Brown. On his return he was posted to Antwerp, where he oversaw the merger of the three advance bases for the Royal Navy, Army and RAF into one joint-services unit. He was appointed CBE in 1969 and retired in 1971.

But Harper's experience in Moscow was to help to provide him with a second career, initially as security adviser to the Central Treaty Organisation in Ankara between 1971 and 1974. On his return he was appointed an instructor at the School of Service Intelligence in Ashford, Kent. He spent the next eight years there, training future military attaches from other countries as well as Britain, for tours of duty in Iron Curtain countries.

Finally retiring in 1982, he was elected as a Conservative member of Ashford Borough Council, becoming leader of the council for five years in 1985. He was also chairman of the Kent Association of District Councils, 1988-90.

A friendly, courteous man, he was a popular and familiar figure in his village, at one time travelling round his ward by bicycle. He also remained a friend of Colonel Spahr — his American fellow-victim.

He met his wife Mary after the war while he was serving as a gunnery instructor at the Indian School of Artillery at Deolali. A South African who had served as a pilot in Britain during the war, she was staying with friends on the sub-continent following the death of her father. They married in India in 1947, being borne to the reception on a gun carriage.

Harper, who died suddenly following a heart attack at home, is survived by his wife, herself in a nursing home, and by their daughter.

SIR DENIS RICKETT

Sir Denis Rickett, Second Secretary at the Treasury, 1960-68, died on February 26 aged 89. He was born on July 27, 1907.

DENIS RICKETT was a leading expert on international finance at the governmental level. He had a distinguished career in the Treasury, where for a number of years he was head of the division dealing with overseas finance. After retiring from Great George Street, he became vice-president of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) in Washington.

Denis Hubert Fletcher Rickett was educated at Rugby School and Balliol College, Oxford. Graduating in 1929 with first-class honours in both Mods and Greats, he was elected a prize Fellow of All Souls and retained his fellowship for 20 years.

For a time he seemed to lean towards the academic life but he developed a strong practical interest in economic questions. In 1931 he joined the staff of the Economic Advisory Council, which had just been established by Neville Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Economic Advisory Council did not prove a very active body, and Rickett still kept one foot in the academic world, but it gave him useful experience in the corridors of Whitehall. As a result, he was invited to join the staff of the War Cabinet offices in 1939, and worked there until 1943, when he became principal private secretary to Oliver Lytton, Churchill's Minister of Production.

After nearly two years in that office, he became personal assistant to Sir John Anderson, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the coalition Government, for special work on nuclear energy. Then, in 1947, he joined the regular

staff of the Treasury. After three years' work there, mainly on overseas financial affairs, he spent a year in No 10 as principal private secretary to the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, but on the change of Government, and as a result of Churchill's desire to have his old private secretary John Colville back, Rickett went to Washington as Economic Minister and head of the British Treasury and Supply Mission. Returning to London after three years in 1955, he began a long term in the Treasury's Overseas Finance Division, first as second-in-command to Sir Leslie Rowan



and then as head of the division.

Overseas financial problems were very much to his taste. During and after the Second World War the Treasury had become much involved in the techniques and procedures of overseas finance — exchange control, the organisation of the sterling area, the management of sterling, control of overseas lending and capital movements, the amount and form of aid to India and other Commonwealth countries and much else besides. The technicalities came easily to Rickett's keen and precise intellect, and he formed a cordial and success-

ful working partnership with Sir George Bolton, the director in charge of overseas finance at the Bank of England.

In view of his Treasury experience, and also his earlier years in Washington, it was hardly surprising when he retired from the Civil Service in 1968, that he was invited to join the World Bank as a vice-president. He had already had much knowledge of financing developing countries, which was the bank's primary function, and he had formed many personal contacts in finance and economic industries all over the world. He remained with the bank until 1974.

Returning to London, he joined J. Henry, Schroder Wagg, the merchant bankers, as a special adviser and a director of Schroder International. He also joined the board of De la Rue, who among other things are probably the biggest printers of banknotes for overseas countries in the world. He was appointed CMG in 1947, CB in 1951 and KCMG in 1956.

Rickett, especially in his earlier years, tended to strike a rather intimidating note with those with whom he came into official contact — and not only with the representatives of countries that wanted to borrow money. (He himself was personally wealthy, even running his own Rolls-Royce.) In his Treasury role he earned a reputation with successive Chancellors for being hard and tough, if also in disposition a shade dry.

At the same time, he could be excellent company when he wished. His overriding private interest was music, which he loved and of which he had a deep and comprehensive knowledge. He was an extremely proficient amateur pianist.

He is survived by his wife Ruth, a doctor whom he married in 1946, and by two sons and a daughter.

CHRISTOPHER HOHLER

Christopher Hohler, art historian, died in Oslo on February 15 aged 80. He was born on January 22, 1917.

A MEMBER of the select group of scholars who shaped the Courtauld Institute in postwar years, Christopher Hohler was a figure of some importance in the art historical world. Yet outside the immediate circle of his colleagues and pupils, few would have realised this. Hohler nurtured no ambition to write, or to achieve recognition as an authority on any one subject — though he was an authority on many subjects.

He did not measure success in terms of appointments or publications. Rather his passion for the past, combined with a genial distaste for all things modern, made him an eccentric, if demanding, teacher. Those who studied under him were richly rewarded. For all his scholarly devotion, Hohler exuded vitality and a zest for life.

Edward Christopher Hohler was born into a family of some wealth and privilege. His boyhood at Long Crendon combined a serious interest in learning with the pursuit of country pastimes such as hunting — his mother considered him one of the most impetuous and irresponsible horsemen she had ever known. His career at Eton was followed by a degree in Modern History at New College, Oxford, from which he graduated in 1938. A year later he married his first wife, Jane.

Joining the Royal Corps of Signals during the Second World War, Hohler was posted to the Combined Intelligence Centre in Iraq. He rapidly came to love the Middle East. Quite apart from

the history, the politics and the intrigue, there was ample opportunity for riding good horses and, next best, motorbikes. He began to learn Arabic with a view to joining the diplomatic service after the war.

However, in 1947, in what must have seemed to almost everyone a most unexpected move, he joined the teaching staff of the Courtauld Institute of Art, then newly under the directorship of Anthony Blunt. Until then his direct involvement in art and architecture had been limited to amateur excavation at Notley Priory, and the researches which resulted in his first publication — on Buckinghamshire medieval tile pavements. Neither can have been regarded as in the mainstream of art history, and his introduction to the Courtauld seems to have owed everything to the good offices of Blunt's predecessor, T. S. R. Boase, who taught Hohler at Oxford.

In many respects, the relationship between Hohler and the institute remained anomalous. He refused to put art in the foreground of his thinking or his teaching. The broader behaviour of people and their cultural and historical circumstances were always his principal field of investigation. Art contributed to our understanding, but it was only a small part of a much larger picture. This was long before the New Art History made study of the social and political context of art fashionable. And yet to those for whom Hohler's approach was already congenial, or those who were able to adapt, he was an outstanding mentor who taught by example.

This is one of the reasons that his influence has been out of all proportion to the num-



Christopher Hohler in Genghis Khan mode, at a medievalist fancy dress party in the 1960s

ber of his publications. He instilled a rigour and intellectual honesty in his pupils which he also demanded of himself, and this did not cease with his graduation, nor upon his retirement in 1979 and subsequent removal to Oslo to be with his second wife Erla (his first marriage having been dissolved in 1961) and their children.

Hohler remained to the end of his life a welcoming host and a tireless correspondent.

The recipients of his letters included not just former students but a wide range of scholars. He could be brutal in his criticisms but he could also be endlessly helpful, devoting days or weeks to answering a query.

Because of his perfectionism, he brought few of his own projects to fruition. In terms of "research assessment exercise" he was a disaster. Long dear to his heart was a study of St Gilles du Gard, the

southern French pilgrimage church, for instance. Even more enduring was his commitment to medieval liturgy on which he produced several stimulating papers.

But it was largely for his invisible contribution that he remained important. Many projects, for example editions of texts for the Henry Bradshaw Society of which he was a vice-president, were undertaken at his suggestion and with his help. He spent years of his life collating manuscripts and made copious notes in his neat, minute handwriting. It was a reference archive he resorted to regularly and which he would lend out to those he trusted.

At times he was prone to the scholar's social vagueness. His occasional failure to remember long-standing students, colleagues and friends by name or face gave the impression that he inhabited another planet. He preferred rising late and working well into the small hours. Persistent rumours that he was the model for Paul Greenfield in Iris Murdoch's *The Bell* were denied with a deadpan "who is Iris Murdoch?" But any apparent remoteness was compensated for by generosity. He would give people books which he felt they ought to own, or invite students to dine with him at his club, Brooks's. He could be charming, witty and convivial: a medievalist's fancy dress party which he and his second wife, Erla, gave in the mid-1960s is fondly remembered by all who attended. His reputed last words were: "I think it's about time for a whisky".

He is survived by the two daughters and two sons of his first marriage, and by his second wife and their two sons and a daughter.

Professor Donald Heath, pathologist, died on February 10 aged 68. He was born on May 4, 1928.

ONE of the last of the line of great classical pathologists, Donald Heath is associated with pulmonary circulation, the pathology of which was his life's work. His monograph *The Human Pulmonary Circulation*, written with Peter Harris, was the authoritative text for a quarter of a century.

Qualifying in medicine at Sheffield University in 1952, Donald Albert Heath joined a cardiovascular centre directed by James Brown. They were to revolutionise understanding of congenital heart diseases.

By 1956 Heath and his colleague, William Whitaker, had become aware that pathological changes in the pulmonary circulation occurred in many cases of congenital heart disease, causing pulmonary hypertension and dominating the clinical source of the disease. They submitted a paper on "hypertensive pulmonary vascular disease" which, rejected by a British clinical journal, was published in an American one.

Soon after, Heath was awarded a Rockefeller Travelling Fellowship to continue his research at the Mayo Clinic. There, in the space of a year, he elucidated the sequence of events which comprise the pathology of hypertensive pulmonary vascular disease. Until that moment the pathology of the pulmonary circulation was virtually unknown.

Heath showed not just the descriptive results of the disease but how it all came about. He next joined the Department of Pathology at Birmingham University. Perhaps the most common and devastating disease in the Midlands at that time was chronic bronchitis, and he began to study the pulmonary circulation in this condition.

This was to result once more in a definitive description of the pathology, summarised in the monograph *Cor Pulmonale in Emphysema*.

It was not certain to what extent the disability of patients with chronic bronchitis was due to a lack of oxygen, and it was, therefore, logical to want to investigate people without pulmonary disease who lived at high altitude where there was a permanent shortage of oxygen. This led to an interest in high altitude medicine which Heath pursued, together with Peter Harris and David Williams, for the rest of his life, and which was gath-

ered together in the monograph *Man at High Altitude*. A particular interest at high altitude was the carotid body, a minute organ in the neck designed to sense the arterial blood for oxygen. Heath made a detailed study of the organ at both high and low altitude in man and animals and, in 1952, wrote *Diseases of the Human Carotid Body*.



Colleagues remember him, in particular, in the Andes or the Himalayas alongside the llamas or yaks which his studies had shown were genetically adapted to high altitude. His unusually large girth was not, as he once put it, "intended by nature for a mountaineer"; and yet his

resilience and energy and good humour under conditions of hardship, low oxygen and cold were remarkable. In such remote places he was a striking figure, dressed always uncompromisingly in a threadbare suit, collar and tie and hat, even after a night spent sleeping on the ground.

In the early 1960s he became interested in the effects of a group of alkaloids derived from plants of the genus *Crotalaria*. He showed that feeding rats with the seeds of *Crotalaria Spectabilis*, used as a cover crop in the Southern states of the US, caused severe and fatal pulmonary hypertension. Several other members of the genus had the same effect, including the common English ragwort, extracts of which he was delighted to find on sale at the local health shop accompanied by literature entitled "how to live 100 years". He and Michael Kay reviewed this great volume of meticulously documented work in *Crotalaria Spectabilis, the Pulmonary Hypertension Plant* in 1969. What had started as a purely academic exercise became important in 1967 when an epidemic of pulmonary hypertension, attributed to a weight-reducing pill, occurred in Europe.

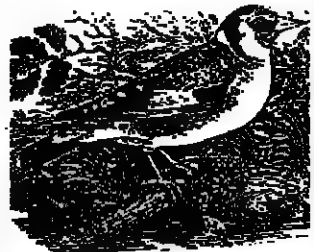
The University of Liverpool appointed him to the Chair of Pathology in 1968. He took up his duties on April 1, a point which he did not allow to go unobserved. He held the chair until his retirement.

Later in life he was afflicted with increasing blindness and cardiac failure. Characteristically he derived a great deal of amusement out of his hospital experiences and refused to allow these disabilities to prevent his continuing to lecture to slides which he could no longer see. Unmarried and with no children, he lived alone, darned his own socks and was only recently persuaded to have a telephone.

Nature notes

GOLDFINCHES are beginning to sing the silvery wintery that they make all the year round turns in March into a sweeter, more elaborate performance. Many more blackbirds have begun singing, especially at dawn and in the dusk: they like to perch on garden walls and TV aerials.

Lapwings have returned to the fields where they will nest, and the males are swooping and diving over their territories, making the wild, insistent call that gives them their other name of "pewit". There are still small flocks of waxwings from Scandinavia in various parts of hawthorn hedges: when a cluster of them first emerges from a bud it looks like a tiny, green starburst. Leaves are also opening on the thorny stems of



The goldfinch

the wild rose bushes, where blackened hips from last year may still hang. Peacock and small tortoiseshell butterflies are coming out of the shadows in which they hung during the winter. Frogs are mating in the ponds: the females deposit their numerous eggs on the bottom, where they absorb water and rise to the surface in jelly-like clumps. DJM

Church news

Appointments

The Rev Pat Hemstock, Assistant Curate, Basford St Aidan, to be full-time Priest-in-charge, Basford St Aidan (Southwell). The Rev Julian Hemstock, Assistant Curate, Basford St Aidan, to be Chaplain's Assistant at Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham (Southwell).

The Rev Dr Richard Henson, Curate (NSM), St Mildred, Lee (Southwell), to be Resident Minister, Donington (Lichfield). The Rev Clifford Knight, formerly Chaplain, RAF, permission to officiate diocese of Hereford: to be Priest-in-charge, Brant Broughton and Beckington W Leadenham and Welbourn (Lincoln).

The Rev Rachel Lewis, Curate, Biddestone W Slaughterford, Castle Combe, Nettleton, West Kingston and Yutton Keynell, and Priest-in-charge, Grittleton and Leigh Delamere: to be Priest-in-charge, Biddestone, Castle Combe, Grittleton W Leigh Delamere, Nettleton, Slaughterford, W King-

ton and Yutton Keynell (Bristol). The Rev David Low, Vicar, St Werburgh, Here: to be also Rural Dean of Stroud (Rochester). The Rev Robert Macmillan, Assistant Curate (NSM), All Saints, Stamford: to be Priest-in-charge, Stipendiary Ministry, Christ Church, Stamford (Lincoln).

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: John Playfair, geologist and philosopher, Benzie, Tayside, 1748; Friedrich von Schlegel, philosopher and historian, Hanover, 1772; Tamara Karsavina, prima ballerina, St Petersburg, 1885; Arthur Honegger, composer, Le Havre, 1892.

DEATHS: Muzio Clementi, pianist and composer, Evesham, 1832; Taras Shevchenko, poet, Ukraine, 1861; Giuseppe Mazzini, Italian patriot, Pisa, 1872; Konstantin Chernenko, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party 1984-85, Moscow, 1985.

TERRIBLE DISASTER AT SEA

The Navarre, owned by Messrs. James Currie and Co., of Leith, has been lost on a voyage from Copenhagen to that port, and between 60 and 70 lives have been lost. Official information of the fact was received yesterday morning by the owners, and the news of the catastrophe is corroborated from several different sources.

The ship was under command of Captain William Haig. The smack Sir Stafford Northcote, which arrived at Hull yesterday, brought five persons rescued from the Navarre, which, it appears, called at Christiansand on the way, and left that place on Sunday night, with 81 passengers, 50 of whom were emigrants, on board. The crew of the smack managed to pick up Miss Alexandra Lotz, a native of Christiansand; William Sinclair, a Scotch seaman; J. Anderson, a Norwegian farmer; T.J. Nygroan, a Swedish smith, and Miss M. Mannall, New York, who was in charge of a number of emigrants. Miss Lotz had a remarkably narrow escape. It appears that she was to windward of the smack after the Navarre went down, and for some time all efforts to throw her a line proved ineffectual. At length, however, she managed to clutch the end of the line, and was able to hold on to it until drawn alongside the smack. Nearly the whole of her clothing had been

ON THIS DAY

March 10, 1883

In valiant efforts to save lives, the smack Sir Stafford Northcote was often in danger of being overwhelmed by the heavy seas.

washed away by the fury of the waves, and she was supplied with what dry apparel as could be found on board a smack. She then was taken to the house of Mr. Pickering, the owner of the smack, and one of her relatives has been telegraphed for. It is stated that long before the Sir Stafford Northcote arrived on the scene there had been a Dutch smack hovering about, but that she made no strenuous efforts to save life except by trying to pick up those who were swimming towards her. One of the passengers lost was Mr. Froggart, a corn merchant. Of the 15 women on board, Miss Lotz was the only one saved, and it was stated to the fishermen by one of the survivors that there were only five cork jackets on board the steamer. The

case of the survivor Nygroan is a very sad one. He is a native of Sweden, and, with his wife and two children, was emigrating to Minnesota. The man, his wife and children were left floating when the vessel went down. The older boy, four years old, first disappeared. The mother frantically embraced the younger child, a baby eight months old, so long as she was conscious; but owing to exposure and the fierceness of the waves she became insensible and sank, leaving the child still on the surface of the ocean. The infant passed close to the side of the smack, and one of the crew took it on board in the hope of being able to restore it. Efforts were made with this object, but they failed. The father was the first to recognize the dead child when he had partially recovered from his exhaustion. Another smack named the Florence and Louise has arrived at Hull with one man from the wreck, who had been saved in a strange manner. It seems that the Florence and Louise, coming up to the sinking ship about the same time as the other smack, saw one of the emigrants floating. He was to the windward of the smack, and some time elapsed before a rope could be thrown to him. His hands were so benumbed that he could not hold the line but he managed to seize it with his teeth and was rescued in an exhausted condition.

TODAY IN THE TIMES GREAT

GETTING INTO THE SWING

Morag Preston learns how to play golf
Sport for All
PAGE 38

LEAP INTO THE FUTURE

A new Super League season beckons
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FAST AND FURIOUS

Coulthard wins, Hill flops in Australia
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SEASON OF SPORT

JUMP START

Andrew Longmore on the Cheltenham matchmakers
PAGE 33

TIMES SPORT

MONDAY MARCH 10 1997

CELEBRATIONS ALL ROUND FOR FINAL FOUR IN FA CUP

Fortunes of draw open the door to first-time finalists

BY ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THE FA Cup, by far the oldest competition in football, has ways of conjuring up fresh romance. Yesterday, after seven hours of quarter-final competition drawn out from the morning till night, the draw for the semi-finals took a few seconds at Lancaster Gate to produce this pairing: Wimbledon v Chelsea; Middlesbrough v Chesterfield.

The games, to be played on Sunday, April 13, at venues that will be decided today, pit Wimbledon's home-grown fighters against Chelsea's imported cavaliers. The other match is bound to bring a virgin team to Wembley Stadium in May, because neither Middlesbrough nor, of course, Chesterfield, have reached the FA Cup Final before.

Indeed, what a semi-final it promises to be for Chris Beaumont. A new name to you? He is 31 and has the reputation of a utility player, having served Rochdale and Stockport County before Chesterfield at right back, midfield, winger, and centre forward.

It was Beaumont's goal against Wrexham that put the club from the town with the crooked spire into the hat with Middlesbrough. Beaumont, unheralded thus far in his profession, will now take the field against Juninho and Emerson, Brazilians both, and the ever hungry Fabrizio

QUARTER-FINAL RESULTS

DERBY COUNTY 0
MIDDLESBROUGH 2
Juninho (36), Ravanelli (90)
Attendance 17,567

WREXHAM 0
CHESTERFIELD 1
Beaumont (58)
Attendance 8,735

PORTSMOUTH 1
Bunton (82)
CHELSEA 4
M Hughes (25), Wise (43, 88), Zola (56)
Attendance 15,701

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 0
WIMBLEDON 2
Earle (74), Holdsworth (90)
Attendance 25,032

Kinnear, admitted: "All the semi-final teams would have liked to have drawn Chesterfield, but if we play as well as we did when we won at Chelsea in the Premiership, then we have half a chance." Half? He foxes, for he knows that Chelsea, imperious though they were in destroying Portsmouth 4-1 yesterday, have not always sustained their concentration for 90 minutes.

At Fratton Park, they did that to supreme effect, and Ruud Gullit enthused that this type of application and quality made a coach very proud. With Juninho and company showing in one semi-final that the best of foreign talent can create movement beyond English imagination, and with Zola *et al* repeating the act for Chelsea, it is obvious that, wherever they are born, players aspire to Wembley and the Cup of Cups.

But first, in the Wimbledon-Chelsea semi-final, we will witness Kinnear's brand of home-grown, spirited team ethic pitted against Chelsea's collection of international stars. Artists versus aristocrats, with Sam Hammam and Ken Bates in the stand.

Title race opens, page 28
Steve McManaman, page 28
Inspired Chelsea, page 29
Scottish view, page 31



Wimbledon: Robbie Earle celebrates his team's opening goal in their 2-0 win over Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough

Chelsea: Mark Hughes feels the weight of Frank Sinclair's appreciation after scoring the first goal against Portsmouth



Middlesbrough: Fabrizio Ravanelli leads his scoring partner Juninho in a victory dance at the Baseball Ground

Chesterfield: Chris Beaumont, scorer of the only goal in the all-second division tie at Saltergate, proves a roaring success



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Oliver Holt, in Melbourne, monitors a day of contrasting fortunes for Britain's leading racers

Coulthard restores McLaren's driving force

One era ended in ignominy and humiliation here in Albert Park yesterday; another dawned bright and vibrant after a long, long night. Stranded by the side of the track before the Australian Grand Prix had even begun, Damon Hill watched the battle for his Formula One world title begin without him. Two hours later, drenched in champagne and tears of joy, David Coulthard stood on the top step of the podium and watched the Union Jack hoisted in salute to a different British winner.

Rarely can a champion have fallen so far so quickly as Hill has done. Rarely can a driver's fortunes have changed so much in the space of two races. From the exultation of his championship triumph in Japan last season, to this most inauspicious of debuts with his new Arrows-Yamaha team, is a driver's equivalent of a journey from heaven to hell.

Coulthard's career, in contrast, is soaring again. Not a man normally given to overt displays of emotion, he admitted that he was so overcome by the significance of the moment that he started crying as he approached the finish line, crying for the resurrection of a career that, like Hill's, seemed to be faltering after a move from Williams; crying, too, with relief at the lifting of a great burden on his McLaren team.

Once a byword for crushing domination of the sport, McLaren had not won a race since Ayrton Senna scored his final victory at the Australian

Grand Prix in Adelaide in 1993 and the team was coming under intense pressure from Mercedes, its engine supplier, to recapture former glories.

Now, even though Coulthard's victory owed something to the first-corner accident that eliminated the Williams-Renault of Jacques Villeneuve, the hot favourite, McLaren have served notice that they are once more in a position to challenge the front-runners. With Michael Schumacher also likely to push Ferrari ever closer to Williams, it should be a vintage season.

"My girlfriend always says I am too hard and unfeeling," Coulthard said after the race, "but I did something I thought

I would never do as I got close to the finish line and started crying. It was a mixture of joy, relief and disbelief.

"I didn't even see the chequered flag because of the tears. On my slowing-down lap, I didn't know whether to sing *Flower of Scotland* or *Scotland the Brave* but then I remembered it was an English team, so I thought I better not."

"At first, I thought I had taken a big step back when I left Williams and arrived at McLaren, but looking at the landing Damon has had, I realise it wasn't really that bad after all. It was a step back but I always knew it had the potential to be a step forward. It felt better than my first win for Williams because this was so unexpected."

"A win like this gives everyone in the team a real momentum. It is more important for Mercedes and McLaren than for me and I am so pleased that I was the driver who ended the long drought."

Suddenly the spirit of McLaren's halcyon days, a time when Ron Dennis, their managing director, and Senna would indulge in practical jokes and outlandish wagers, came flooding back. Before Christmas, Dennis agreed to wear a kilt at an awards ceremony and Coulthard's part of the bargain was a payment of £25,000 to a children's charity.

The Scot, whose only other race victory came in the Portuguese Grand Prix in 1995, when he was Hill's team-mate at Williams, also revealed he would have to dye his hair the colour of McLaren's new silver cars before the Brazilian Grand Prix in three weeks' time to fulfil the terms of another bet.

It is probable, though, that his victory would not have been possible without the misfortune that befell Villeneuve, who had qualified in pole position with a performance so imperious that it suggested he would dominate the race from start to finish.

That impression dissolved within the first 50 yards, when his Williams-Renault crawled away from the line and was swallowed up by four or five of his rivals. As he turned into the first corner, a right-hander, he was hit by the skidding Ferrari of Eddie Irvine. Villeneuve, in turn, collided with the Sauber-

Petrone of Johnny Herbert and both ended up marooned in a gravel trap.

Herbert labelled Irvine, who drove him off the circuit at Monza two years ago, "a wild man and an idiot. He has ruined the race for me, Jacques and the crowd. But there is no point talking to him about it because he just says: 'It was not my fault.'"

Irvine said exactly that after the race and although Villeneuve, too, was critical of him, the stewards chose not to punish the Ulsterman.

With Villeneuve out of the race, Frentzen, Hill's replacement at Williams, opened up a commanding lead. Running a two-stop strategy compared

with the one-stop plan preferred by Coulthard and Schumacher, he used the advantage of a lighter fuel load to establish a ten-second advantage over Coulthard.

He fell back to third when he made his first stop after 18 laps but regained the lead when Coulthard and Schumacher made their stops on the 33rd and 31st laps respectively. When he made his second stop after 40 laps, he was nearly 23 seconds ahead.

His stop was longer than it should have been, though, and instead of darting out ahead of his pursuers, he left the pit lane five seconds after they had hurried by. He reduced the margin but, with four laps

to go, a brake problem sent him spinning out of the race. Williams had started the season without a point.

Any faint hopes that Schumacher may have had of mounting a late challenge to Coulthard disappeared eight laps from the end, when Ferrari called him in for an unscheduled second stop for fuel. Mystified by the move, he nevertheless managed to keep ahead of the second McLaren, driven by Mika Hakkinen, and finished two seconds ahead of the Finn.

By then, Hill was on his way to the airport to catch his plane home, left to reflect on a weekend that could hardly have gone worse. From Satur-

day afternoon, when he narrowly escaped failure to qualify for the race, to yesterday afternoon, when his car slowed to a sorry halt on the formation lap, he endured a purgatorial two days.

Plagued by reliability problems and hobbled by a lack of horsepower from his Yamaha engine, the Englishman is trapped in a car that is one of the worst in the field. Success this year will mean achieving respectability and although Hill has the talent, the drive and the development skills to reach that target, it will be a long, hard road.

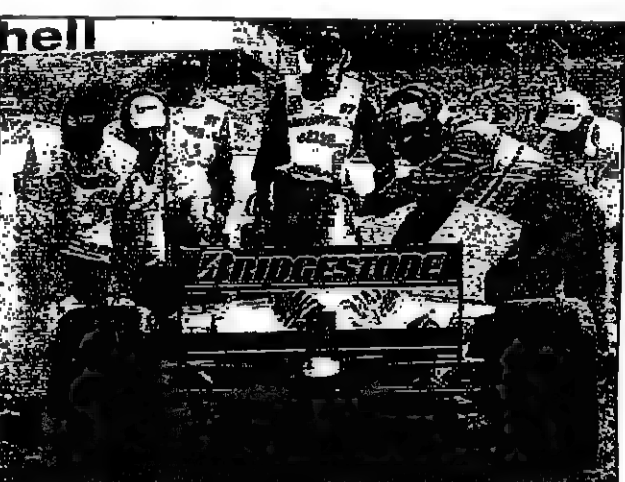
"I am philosophical about it," Hill said, "because I knew it was going to be difficult to

get reliability. I think debacle is too strong a word for it because it was what we expected. There have been little things going wrong all the time. We just need to get down to some testing and put these things behind us."

For now, though, he will have to grin and bear the sympathy and the pity that is heading in his direction, along with the jokes of some of his rivals. When Schumacher, for instance, was asked if he realised Hill had broken down on the parade lap, his reply was withering. "Our wing mirrors are not that good," he said.



Flying the flag: Coulthard is proud to reveal his true colours while celebrating his unexpected first victory for McLaren at Albert Park yesterday



False start: Hill, right, helps to push his Arrows off the track after its engine failed on the warm-up lap

HOCKEY

Cup brings cheer for goalless Cambridge

Cambridge University ... 0
Oxford University ... 0

By ALIX RAMSAY

CAMBRIDGE retained the Challenge Cup at the 96th annual women's University match on Saturday, but only just. Their 3-0 victory last year — only the second definite result in six matches — gave them the trophy and the draw this time ensures that the silverware is theirs for a further 12 months.

There was much scurrying hither and thither, but little sense of direction. Sophie Gilder, sporting a black eye after a ball hit her in the face during training, tried to show the way for the light blues by getting in the thick of what little action there was but no one seemed able to follow. The clearest chance fell to Nat Redpath but, from one yard out, she could only tap the ball to the Oxford goalkeeper, Charlotte Deane.

Victoria Pope tried to instil some discipline and organisation from the centre of the Oxford midfield, but to no

avail. Their coach, Ian Boddington, spent much of the day with his head in his hands, particularly after their penalty-corner count had reached double figures.

Nobody ever suggested the University match would be a test of finesse — all that matters is the cup. Oxford could, at least, celebrate the second XI's 1-0 victory, after a goal from Sarah Stirling 15 minutes from time.

CAMBRIDGE: C Wright (St Catherine's, Melbourne and St Catherine's); F Pantazis (Colchester Co HS and Churchill); E Wood (Kings HS for Girls and Jesus); K Hunter (Trenton and Glen); S Gilder (Cheltenham Ladies and St John's); R O'Brien (Manchester HS for Girls and Glen); C Edmondson (Trenton HS and St John's); S Boyd-Smith (James Allen's Girls HS and St John's); E Kelly (Rossall and King); J Doble (Howell's and Ennerdale); N Redpath (Nottingham Univ and St Edmund's); Sub: S Parnham-Jones (The Castle and Downings); S Boyd (Regent House GS and Christ's).
OXFORD: C Deane (Croydon HS and University); L Atkinson (Lady Eleanor Holles and Jesus); C Birt (Kington GS and St John's); C McGovern (Nottingham Girls and Magdalen); E Williamson (Churchill HS and New College); V Pope (Plymouth and Pentlands); C Pickford (Farnham GS and Queen's); N Jackson (St Hilda's C of E HS and St Hugh's); C Taylor (Kendrick and Quaker's); N Watson (St Christopher's Histon and Kettle); Sub: A Morgan (Cheltenham Ladies and Corpus Christi); L Huddell (King's, Canterbury and Lady Margaret Hall); J Sanders (Breadford Girls GS and New College); Unplaced: T Sharp and I Liversage (East

ICE HOCKEY

Lyle devilry torments Manchester

By NORMAN DE MESQUITA

CARDIFF Devils and Nottingham Panthers are on the threshold of the Superleague semi-finals with three wins out of three in their quarter-final play-offs. In contrast, Manchester Storm, whose home rink is the venue for the closing stages of the championship, have lost both of their games so far, have yet to score a goal and seem unlikely to qualify.

Although Stevie Lyle in the Cardiff goal stole the headlines, saving all 27 Manchester shots that came his way on Friday, his opposite number, Eric Raymond, was brilliant and Cardiff's win would have been even more decisive than 3-0 but for him.

Similarly, Trevor Robins had another outstanding game in goal for the Panthers in their win over Sheffield Steelers on Saturday. Ashley Tait scored the only goal of the first period, his backhand shot going in off the post, to give the Panthers the lead and it was 4-0 seven minutes into the second period, two of the goals coming in 17 seconds. Jason Lafreniere pulled one back for the Steelers and Robins made a rare mistake to allow Jamie Leach to make it 4-2, but the Panthers won 6-3.

Ayr Scottish Eagles seemed to be favourites to accompany Cardiff into the semi-finals from Group A after a 5-0 away success against Newcastle Cobras. Sven Rannps achieved the shut-out with 29 saves while the all-round strength of Ayr was demonstrated by their ten different scorers.

The closest game on Saturday was at Basingstoke, where Bison left it until there was only 10 seconds of overtime remaining to beat Bracknell Bees. Chris Maybury gave the home side a 1-0 first-period lead and Shayne McCosh scored the only goal of the second period to level Steve Brown restored Basingstoke's lead in the third period but Mike Ellis brought the Bees level within two minutes. Kevin Conway, with his second assist of the game, set up Merv Priest for the winner.

Cannock's fall cuts field to two

By SYDNEY FRISKIN

THE race for the premier division title in the National League was reduced to a two-horse contest between Teddington and Reading yesterday after Cannock dropped out of the running.

Cannock lost 5-4 at home to Teddington while Reading registered a 4-2 win at home to Guildford to stay a point clear at the top of the table. The championship will be decided on April 6, when Reading entertain Cannock and Canterbury visit Teddington.

The match at Cannock was decided when Hauck scored for Teddington two minutes before the end. Only two minutes earlier Parnham's goal from a short corner had levelled the score at 4-4 for Cannock, who had trailed 4-1. Two goals by Billson followed by one from Hauck added to the lead that Laslett had given Teddington. Cannock hitting back with two goals by Crutchley and another by Sharpe.

Reading were 2-1 down against Guildford but recovered their composure in the second half with goals by Wyatt, from a penalty stroke, Ashdown, from a short corner, and Loose in open play. Ashdown had also given Reading the lead in the fourth minute from a short corner. Jennings scored Guildford's goals, from a short corner and a penalty stroke.

In the struggle to avoid relegation Barford Tigers gained a two-point advantage over Surbiton with a 4-2 at Havant, although Surbiton have a game in hand. Barford Tigers have one more match left against East Grinstead, while Surbiton have yet to play Old Loughtonians and Hounslow.

Surbiton lost 3-1 yesterday at Southgate, whose goals all came in the second half from Attala, Simons and Woods.

David Ralph scored three goals for Old Loughtonians, including two from penalty strokes, in their 5-4 victory at East Grinstead, for whom Laird scored two.

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FOOTBALL: FERGUSON'S SELECTION MISJUDGMENT CONTRIBUTES TO UNEXPECTED SETBACK FOR FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP LEADERS

United's fall opens up title contest

Sunderland 2
Manchester United 1

By PETER BALL

THE English language has a saying for virtually every occasion. Choosing the right one was the question at Roker Park on Saturday as Sunderland hustled Manchester United to an unexpected defeat. Did it represent the dustcart arriving on cue after United's Lord Mayor's Show against FC Porto — or of pride going before a fall?

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, put up a spirited defence. "There's a price to pay for these big games," he said. "Everyone was in such a high after Wednesday, I expected the backlash a bit."

"It was hard to get them going today. After half an hour, you know, you were just looking for a spark from one of the players, but it just wasn't there. We just looked dead, couldn't get going at all."

He had a point. Perhaps most telling of all was the lacklustre performance of David May. So authoritative and on the pace on

Full results and league tables Page 30

Wednesday, on Saturday he looked tentative and uncertain, as if he was playing, as he was, his third game in eight days after a month's absence for a hernia operation.

Where Jardel and Artur had been repelled with ease, Mullin on one occasion left him tackling air. Later, the young Sunderland forward outpaced and outmuscled him to score Sunderland's second goal and his first since September 1995.

May was not alone. Schmeichel's concentration wavered more than once and his fumble gave the first goal to Gray, the first by a Sunderland player at Roker Park this year.

Cantona was the Cantona of most of this season, hovering on the fringes of the action for the first hour rather than the imperious figure of Wednesday. Beckham had some good moments, one pass sending Cantona striding through the Sunderland defence, but only the admirable Gary Neville was his usual self.

Ferguson argued that his team selection, leaving Cole, Solskjaer and Giggs on the bench, was intended to freshen things up. It looked like a serious misjudgment even before the start.

In the event, against Sunderland, who were looking to put a 4-0



Kelly has a painful landing after being tackled by McClair but the Sunderland midfielder was smiling at the end

midweek thrashing by Tottenham Hotspur behind them, it proved fatal. Poborsky and Cruyff may just about be all right to bring into a full-strength side against Coventry City at Old Trafford. With Pallister injured and Keane suspended, asking them to take on such a big responsibility at Roker Park was too much.

Poborsky offered little flashes of inspiration, but Cruyff looks out of his depth in the vigorous English game. After ten minutes, Beckham waved Gary Neville down the line and found him with a sweeping free kick. Neville crossed first-time on the run, the sort of inviting centre that Shearer had pounced on with such relish in the European championship last year. Cruyff failed even to make a challenge for it.

With nothing at the front, United had ceded the advantage to Sunderland and how well they took it. Bracewell and Ball winning midfield, where McClair struggled, and the spindly-legged Bridges and

Mullin running at United's back five with enthusiasm as Roker roared in the spring sunshine. "It was like a cup-tie," Ferguson said. But it always is at Roker Park. United's understrength side could not cope. Giggs, who had felt his

hamstring injury in the warm-up, stayed on the bench and by the time Cole and Solskjaer appeared the game had begun to slip away from United.

"The two front players had covered so much ground and



Mullin, scorer of Sunderland's second goal, outjumps Johnsen

worked so hard on Wednesday. I just didn't think they would give us anything anyway," Ferguson said. But when they arrived they gave more than their replacements.

The consequences may be momentous, giving Sunderland a large step towards safety and opening the title door to Liverpool and maybe Arsenal. Now, if Liverpool win all their remaining games, they will be champions.

"I've had two bets," Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, said afterwards. "That we will stay up and that United will win the Premiership. I think they are both cast-iron certainties."

He may be right but on Saturday, against the odds, suddenly the bet on his own team looked the safer.

SUNDERLAND (4-5-2): I. Perez — G. Hall, A. Marshall, R. Gray, D. May — D. Kelly, P. Bracewell (sub: D. Williams (30min), F. Ball, M. Gray — J. Mullin, M. Bridges (sub: C. Fyfe, 74). MANCHESTER UNITED (3-5-2): P. Schmeichel — R. Johnson, D. May, D. Keane — G. Neville, S. Poborsky, sub: G. Solskjaer, 57; D. Beckham, B. McClair, P. Neville — E. Cantona, J. Cruyff (sub: A. Cole, 57). Referee: P. Jones

Bergkamp makes Forest pay for negative outlook

Arsenal 2
Nottingham Forest 0

By BRIAN GLANVILLE

A PETRIFIED Forest indeed. They came for a point, they got none at all. By contrast with their smash-and-grab raid in north London a week earlier at Tottenham Hotspur, Dean Saunders's one menacing moment produced not a goal but a seemingly valid offside decision. "These incidents can alter the course of the game," Dave Bassett, their new general manager, said.

Well, maybe. The fact is that Forest came to Highbury in the faint hope of grabbing something in an isolated raid. Bassett admitted that their confidence had been undermined by their collapse at home in midweek against Sheffield Wednesday. Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, contests that Arsenal's own confidence had been dented by successive defeats at home to Manchester United and Wimbledon. Patience, he said, was needed in such circumstances. The opening goal, which eventually came five minutes after half-time, was essential to success.

"You could see the confidence was not there," Wenger said. "You could see Nottingham Forest were well-organised and waiting for the counter."

In the event, the counter hardly came at all. Forest's one legitimate strike of any consequence arrived in the nineteenth minute when Guinan, their substitute, got his head to Pearce's free kick from the left but Keown, ever resourceful, cleared from the line. Just as his own header had earlier been cleared from Forest's.

Forest reportedly have £16 million to spend and they had better start spending it soon if they hope to stay in the FA Carling Premiership. Bassett says they have been trying to buy, but with scant response. Understandably, perhaps, Forest may now be rich, but who wants to step onto a sinking ship?

As the game, in the first half, wore tediously on, you found yourself hoping for an Arsenal goal that might have jolted Forest into sending someone up front beside the lonely Saunders. Nigel Clough has not got the pace to support him, now. Bryan Roy, disappointing Holland international quite overshadowed by his compatriot, Den-

nis Bergkamp — did not, as Bassett said, make a difference when he was brought on. But what could he reasonably be expected to do in little more than a quarter of an hour?

With the suspended Ian Wright watching from the press box, Bergkamp carried Arsenal's banner with distinction. He scored both their goals, the second from the penalty spot, and was a trial to Forest's overmanned defence.

Wenger was delighted with him. "Maybe the most consistent game he has played, because there was not only talent, but a fighter. He goes in one to one, puts his foot in. He scored two goals and created a lot of chances. A world-class player, but he shows that he can fight, also."

All this despite a gruesome foul on the Holland striker by Forest's Norwegian midfielder player, Haaland, as early as the twelfth minute. Mike Reed, the referee, unforgiven by Leicester City supporters after that penalty at Chelsea, talked to Haaland like, you could say, a Dutch uncle, no immediate booking. Nor did he send him off when Haaland gave away a penalty 11 minutes from time, handling the ball on the ground under pressure from Bergkamp. Haaland, in fact, stayed out of Reed's book until the 72nd minute. Bergkamp himself put the penalty away.

In the first half, Bergkamp's right-footed shot from the left was well saved by Crossley, who also managed to repel a shot by Platt and a thundering drive by Hughes. An even better save was made, point blank from Merson, and it seemed possible that Crossley might emulate Tommy Wright, whose goalkeeping had defied Tottenham the previous Saturday.

Five minutes into the second half, however, Vieira, who had just been off the field for treatment, returned to split Forest's defence with a through-pass and Bergkamp sent his shot inside the far post.

Forest were lucky to escape when first Hughes, then Merson, broke through alone. Crossley saved each time, on the second occasion for a corner. Reed gave a goal kick. "Nobody knew why. A broken Reed?"

Forest were lucky to escape when first Hughes, then Merson, broke through alone. Crossley saved each time, on the second occasion for a corner. Reed gave a goal kick. "Nobody knew why. A broken Reed?"

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Adams, Vieira, Bergkamp and Wright on Wenger's Highbury revolution

'Whatever it takes, I'll do it'

Stuart Pearce — no time for losers



THE ESSENTIAL FOOTBALL MONTHLY
APRIL ISSUE ON SALE NOW

Molenaar acts to provide relief from mediocrity

Leeds United 1
Everton 0

By KEITH PIKE

IN OTHER seasons, a meeting of these sides on FA Cup sixth-round weekend might have been trailed as one of the games of the season. This, though, promised little and delivered as much, save the three points that all but ensure Leeds United's continued membership of the FA Carling Premiership and the defeat that leaves Everton looking ever more anxiously over their shoulders.

That both teams are in what optimistic supporters and stressed managers like to term "a period of transition" is undeniable. Only Carlton Palmer, of Leeds, and the Everton quartet of Southall, Short, Watson and Ferguson started the corresponding feature 12 months ago, but, for all the excuses, there were enough expensively acquired internationals on sizeable salaries playing on Saturday to have demanded something more than mediocrity.

Even that was beyond some. The Leeds followers cannot have enjoyed watching Yeboah posturing and Rush reduced to the ranks of mid-field ball-winners, while Barmby and Unsworth, recent England internationals both, came impressively close to proving that good players can indeed become bad ones overnight. Naturally enough, both managers professed themselves content with their teams, which said something about limited ambitions but perhaps more about the concentration of real talent with those clubs at the business end of the division.

The success? Martyn, faultless in the Leeds goal, and Palmer, predictably enough, on an occasion made for scufflers. Between them, Wetherall and Molenaar also managed to nullify Ferguson's aerial threat, which is commendable enough if decidedly unexciting, and Molenaar was negligently allowed enough space to head the decisive

goal, from Bowyer's corner, in the 28th minute.

Martyn, who had earlier saved competently from Ferguson and Phelan, subsequently did so bravely from Branch and, at the death, spectacularly from Speed's header, guaranteeing Leeds their seventh clean sheet in eight league games, their fifth in a row at home and ninth place in the Premiership: admirably numbing statistics that prompted one outbreak of media hysteria. What about Europe, George Graham was asked. "It's either there or the Caribbean," the Leeds manager replied, adding: "You are talking about holidays, aren't you?"



Martyn: faultless

Joe Royle, the Everton manager, could yet be planning day trips to such exotic resorts as Southend and Swindon. His side, having taken six points out of 30, are in a deep rut at the wrong time, a team without luck — for all their failings they just about deserved a draw here — but also without conviction. Martyn could have joined them when he left Crystal Palace but preferred Leeds and he will not be regretting his decision this morning.

LEEDS UNITED (3-5-2): M. Martyn — R. Molenaar, D. Wetherall, H. Hare — G. Hall, C. Palmer, J. Fyfe, L. Bowyer, L. Sharpe — B. Barmby, J. Unsworth. EVERTON (3-5-2): N. Southall — C. Short, sub: P. Robinson, 30min; D. Walsby, D. L. Edwards — E. Barclay, C. Thompson, J. Pringle, sub: G. Short, 30; G. Speed, T. Pringle — N. Barmby, sub: M. Branch, 40; G. Forster. Referee: S. Sadleir

Roker trip confirms that race will go to the wire

After what was a crushing disappointment at Villa Park the past week could not have been better had we written the script ourselves. OK, I know we were overwhelming favourites against SK Brann but so were PSV Eindhoven.

My point is that it was a tricky game, especially given the apparent confidence back home that it would be a walkover. Manchester United's performance against Porto didn't help either, because even more was expected from us.

We delivered. An away goal puts us in control of the tie and that is always a source of satisfaction. The pressure is off a little now for the home leg because we don't have to go in search of a goal, we can relax and build at our own pace.

Saturday also brought a decent result and we didn't even play. I can confess now that I did not expect Manchester United to lose at Sunderland. Not because Sunderland are a bad side — their 0-0 draw at Anfield proved that they are difficult opponents — it's just that after the great result in midweek, you could see Manchester United brimming with confidence, and remember that Sunderland went into the game on the back of a demoralising defeat at home to Tottenham.

It was a nice surprise, then, and there are two issues that the result raises. First, it reiterates what I have said in this column all season, that this year's FA Carling Premiership is wide open because any team can beat any other.

The television money means that every team has some quality players. The top teams, of course, have more, that is why they are at the top, but on their day even the lower teams have enough weapons to hurt anybody, especially if they are as committed as Sunderland clearly are.

My second point is that I believe it confirms what the top teams have found for

STEVE McMANAMAN



on twists and turns in the title battle

years — there can frequently be a dip in form after a decent midweek performance in Europe, or even when several players have been away on international duty.

After the emotional high and the adrenalin-pumping pressure of a big game such as United's against Porto, players can be drained for a few days. It is not easy to lift yourself so quickly, and it's not necessarily a physical thing but a psychological one. You get that situation after

'Lower teams still have the weapons to hurt'

you have been away with England, and I am sure United have the same problem. Alex Ferguson said that a few of his players were knackered, and I can understand that. Anyway, the result offers the initiative back to Liverpool in the championship race to a certain extent. We had a European game as well, but the fact that we have an extra day to recover will, we hope, be significant.

When I was thinking about writing this before Saturday, I had thought that I would reflect upon the fact that a four-point gap between us and United with ten or so games to go is not an insurmountable one. After our

defeat at Villa, we were widely condemned and the title race was declared over. Manchester United were generally regarded as having it in the bag.

However, even before they lost, I was convinced that it was too early to make predictions like that, and my point was proved even before I had the opportunity to write it. At this stage in the season sides are desperate for points for different reasons and those challenging for the title are under extreme pressures of their own. Points can be dropped anywhere and now it is merely a question of keeping going and keeping your nerve.

Now, a week after the title race was supposedly over, it will be wide open again if we can beat Newcastle this evening, and if we do, then I am sure there will still be more twists and turns before the championship is finally decided.

I still think it will go to the wire and I still would not rule Arsenal out. What is important is that we get a result against Newcastle tonight. Defeat would again hand the impetus back to Manchester United and that would be criminally wasteful.

Despite our defeat at Villa Park, I think our form of late has been very good, and that will be important on the run-in. When the pressure is really on — as it will be over the next two months — then you have to rely on instinct and nerve to see you through.

If you are playing well, then that immediately offers confidence and can breed a consistency that is vital. It is what we must find now. To win the title we have to string together a decent run of results and we are confident enough to do that.

We know we have played well recently even though results have not always gone our way. The game against Blackburn was evidence of that. But in Norway we also showed that we have a resilience which could prove important over the forthcoming weeks.

Strachan apologises to fans for draw bore

Coventry City 0
Leicester City 0

By A CORRESPONDENT

GORDON STRACHAN, the Coventry City manager, was blunt in his appraisal of this featureless FA Carling Premiership contest. "It was not value for money," Strachan said, "and everybody at the club must take the blame for that."

Coventry have garnered a mere four points from their past six matches. Darren Huckerby, as so often, caused some early problems for the visitors but it was an uphill struggle. Leicester will feel that they are one point closer to survival, now only five short of the 42 that Martin O'Neill, their ineffectual manager, identified as required to stay in the Premiership.

O'Neill, whose team defended resolutely and were marginally the better side, said: "I thought we passed the ball around well at times without having the cutting edge but that's another important point for us."

Points of interest in a match of commitment and energy, but lacking in skill, were few and far between. Taylor, the Leicester substitute, had the two best chances to score for his team, but was profligate. Keller, the United States international, made his customary series of good saves.

Strachan admitted that he had brought John Salako back from injury too soon. Salako was substituted 24 minutes after being brought on at half-time.

Salako was less than thrilled and was away from Highfield Road within 15 minutes of the final whistle. The majority of the 19,220 crowd must have wished that they had departed as quickly.

COVENTRY CITY (3-5-2): S. Oppenheim — D. O'Brien, G. Brown, A. Evershed — P. Taylor, sub: J. Salako, 45min, sub: P. Nelson, 70; G. Huckerby, R. Richardson, E. Jones, sub: B. Barrow, 35; A. Shaw — N. Whelan, D. Hatcher. LEICESTER CITY (3-5-2): K. Keller — J. Taylor, 13, E. Walsh — S. Grayson, 19, L. Johnson, 15, P. Taylor, 11, S. Grayson — E. H. Jones, 15, S. Taylor, 57, M. Roberts (sub: J. Lawrence, 60). Referee: P. J. Jordan

THE TIMES
FOOTBALL
Hughes
Chelsea
past Porto

Middlesbrough
over as Ray

Sunday service

FOOTBALL: PREMIERSHIP SIDE DISPLAYS CLASS AND COMPOSURE TO ACCOUNT FOR UNDERDOGS AND REACH FA CUP SEMI-FINALS

Hughes excels as Chelsea coast past Portsmouth

Portsmouth
Chelsea 4

By ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

CHELSEA silenced the Pompey Chimes at Fratton Park yesterday lunchtime, winning by a score, and with a composure that spelled class. Portsmouth may have been able to travel to Eland Road in the fifth round of the FA Cup and outplay Leeds United, but they were never anything but pretenders to Chelsea's vast superiority in the quarter-final.

The goals, from Mark Hughes, from Wise — who scored twice — and, of course, from Zola, were simply marks for the skill that overwhelmed the Nationwide League first division side. In return, though, Portsmouth were allowed to mark in an altogether different way, were given licence to kick shins black and blue, they never left the desired imprint on the Fulham Road aristocrats. Nor, indeed, did the supposed ability of Terry Venables, the Portsmouth owner, to bemoan a more talented team with tactics, prove anything more than an empty notion.

We should be grateful. It is one thing to travel to an FA Cup tie in hope of romance, of the lesser club beating the greater one by dint of effort and application. It is another to allow talents of imagination to be bludgeoned in the name of English cup fare.

Rudolf Gullit, himself on crutches, asked his centre forward, Mark Hughes, afterwards: "What have you done to these players for ten years?"

Why do they want to kick you like this?

Gullit, proud of the way that his sometimes distracted team concentrated for the full 90 minutes, later said: "Mark may have calves that are very big, but that doesn't mean you can kick them whenever you want. It is good to see a player like him, still hungry, setting a good example for the team. I knew exactly how Portsmouth would play, and we knew that if we continued to use one

headed and sleek in possession, as a spare defender whose class looked apart from all else. With similar styles the teams fenced, but while Leboeuf engineered Chelsea's offside trap to perfection, there was no equivalent brain in Portsmouth blue.

Up front it was the movement of Chelsea, the international awareness, that time and again eluded Portsmouth. Zola would simply not be marked. He took up positions 20 yards behind Hughes, he darted here and there, his touch was ever true, but he had missed an opportunity after 17 minutes, allowing Knight, playing his 738th game for Portsmouth, to block bravely at his feet.

Nevertheless, movement and thought would eventually take Portsmouth apart. Di Matteo chipped the ball down the centre, Perrett, a lumbering centre half who wasted few opportunities to hack at Hughes, misjudged the flight, and Hughes, unquestionably still the best centre forward of his type, delayed his run, allowed the ball to bounce, and watched Knight come towards him. Then, with venom, with absolute certainty, he swung his right foot and dispatched the ball past the stranded goalkeeper.

That was in the 25th minute. Class had told — would Chelsea's concentration? They were being buffeted: Svensson kicked Leboeuf, Perrett was horribly late with a tackle on Hughes. There had been nothing by way of reprisal in Portsmouth's attacks when, two minutes from half-time, Chelsea effectively settled the unequal match.

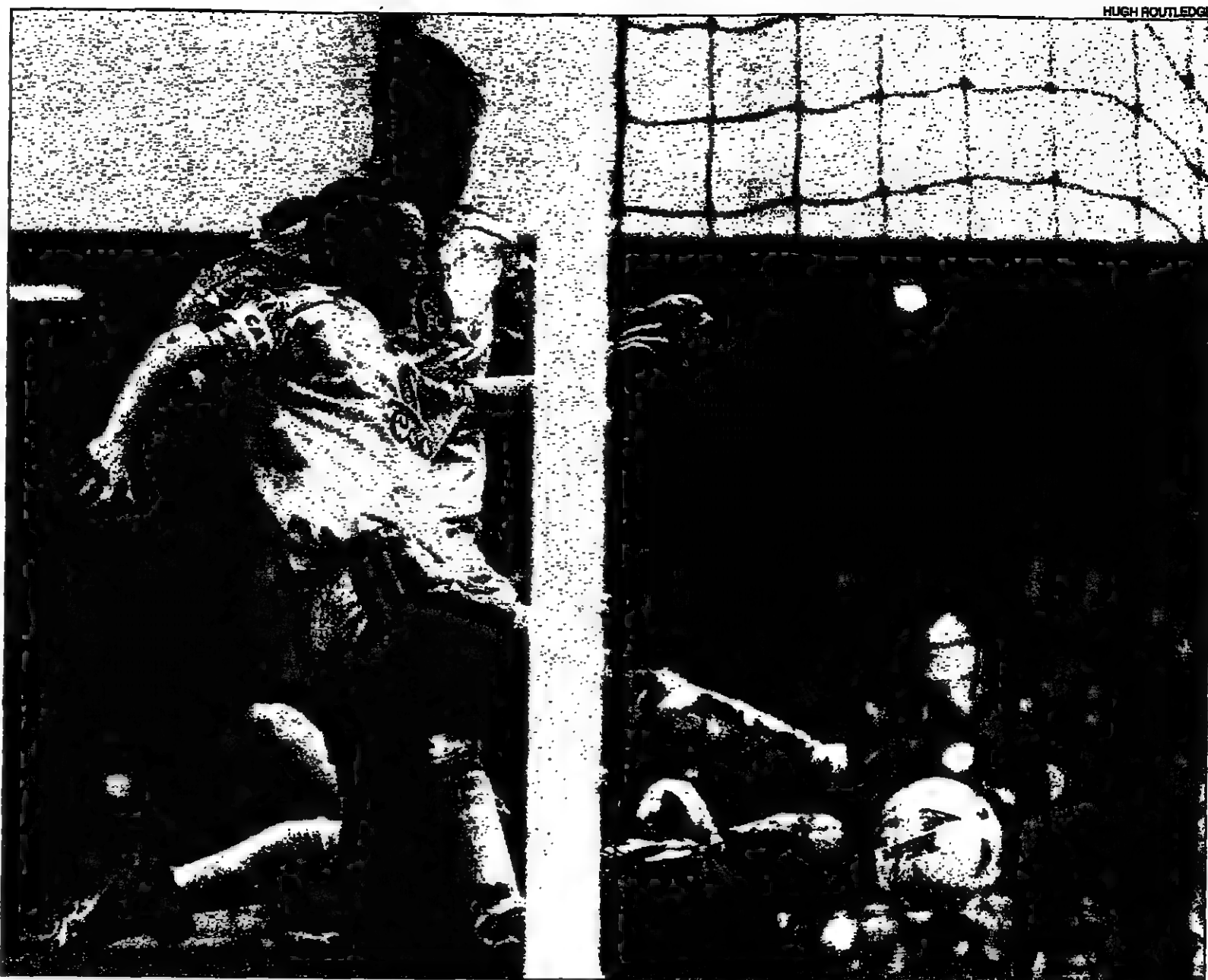


touch or two, we would be able to reach the semi-final. You will have to ask the referee about the tackles, I can only tell you I am quite happy as a coach to see the way my team physically and tactically coped with the situation."

Hughes was happy too. He is 90 minutes away from the opportunity to win a fourth FA Cup winner's medal. As a Manchester United player and as a Barcelona player under Venables, Hughes got his retaliation in first. Yesterday, we saw the more virtuous side of his temperament and his talent.

It took 25 minutes for Hughes to strike. Before then, with the sea mist rolling in and the old stands of Fratton Park shaking with raucous expectation, Chelsea had gradually silenced the home support.

They had Leboeuf, shaven-



Knight is helpless as Wise applies the finishing touch to put Chelsea 2-0 ahead against Portsmouth at Fratton Park yesterday

Zola stood over the ball for a free kick two yards outside the penalty box. Portsmouth waited in fear of the shot, so the Italian chipped the ball towards the far post in a rehearsed move. Clarke was unmarked and, though his header was pushed away by Knight, Clarke was quick to the rebound. The ball would have gone in from him had Wise not nipped forward to

complete its movement over the line.

Portsmouth did attempt a tactical reshuffle. They came out after the break in a Dutch 3-4-3 formation, with Hall up alongside Bradbury and Svensson. Fleetingly it aroused the home support, but after Grosas had scampered to beat Hall to the ball, Chelsea suddenly broke to score their third.

Hughes began the momentum on the right. Di Matteo then linked with Zola, the first Italian cushioning the ball before releasing it, the second sidefooting it past Knight. Zola's final touch was an easy, incisive, rapier's thrust.

On spirit alone did Portsmouth come back. Seven minutes from time they broke the length of the field. Simpson ran alertly for Awford's clear-

ance, controlled the ball and put it into the path of Burton, who from 13 yards claimed the consolation goal. But that was all it was.

Three minutes later, though Knight had already made a superlative stop from Burley, the goalkeeper miskicked a clearance straight to Wise. From Wise to Hughes and back to Wise again the ball was played until, with con-

summation ease, Wise scored. "Can we play you every week?" the Chelsea fans chorled, but they are a stride away from Wembley.

PORTSMOUTH (2-4-1-2): A Knight — A Thompson, R Perrett, A Awford — R Perrett, D Hillier, A McLaughlin, F Simpson (sub: S Igoo, 75min) — P Hall — L Bradbury, M Svensson (sub: D Burton, 60). CHELSEA (3-5-2): F Grosas — F Sinclair, F Leboeuf (sub: E Johnson, 77), S Clarke — D Perrett, R Di Matteo (sub: C Burley, 62), D Wise, P Hughes, S Minto — G Zola, M Hughes. Referee: J Winter.

Middlesbrough's cups runneth over as Ravanelli sees the light

Derby County.....0
Middlesbrough.....2

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

AT THE end of this abrasive, often unseemly FA Cup tie, there was a rare shaft of light. Ravanelli, who had spent most of the afternoon behaving like a stage Italian, took Juninho's pass on the left side of the Derby County penalty area and struck a shot like an arrow beyond the blameless Taylor. It was an excellent goal and confirmed Middlesbrough's place, for the first time, in the semi-finals of the FA Cup.

But, as their fans sang about going to Wembley twice, Bryan Robson might wish to trade in some of their Cup form for league points. Their position at the bottom of the FA Carling Premiership offers a more revealing portrait of the side and a fairer reflection of his ability as a manager. They are not too good to go down, and the more the two cups occupy their attention, the greater will be the distraction from the relegation fight.

There was not much football at the Baseball Ground and

Middlesbrough attempted to play most of it. Deprived of Sturridge, who was suspended, Derby lacked swiftness in attack. Ward and Willers made an ineffective pairing, and Asanovic was not far behind Ravanelli in his homagage to Theopis. For a team that had lost 6-1 to Middlesbrough four days previously, Derby were a huge disappointment.

Juninho's command of the ball, and his ability to run past defenders, enabled Middlesbrough to carry the day. The little Brazilian scored a fine goal in the first half, taking back the pass he gave to



Juninho: full of grace

Hignett and slipping a left-footed shot beyond Taylor. He conferred on the game what grace it had.

In a different way Pearson, the Middlesbrough captain, proved no less important. Together with Festa, the Italian, he provided a defensive bulwark in front of Roberts, whose saves of note were few. Pearson is one of those "solid" professionals who turn up on time, get on with the job without complaint, and rarely feature in headlines. Some of his more pampered teammates, and one or two mardy boys elsewhere, could perhaps remember sometimes those who also serve.

The early skirmishes were grubby, ugly, even. After Ravanelli was booked for a late challenge that left Chris Powell grounded, Mr Poll added the names of three Derby men, Carsley, Flynn and Ward, all before the twentieth minute. There was anger in the air, and the match suffered, though, in making chances for Beck, Ravanelli and Juninho, Middlesbrough retained the clearer heads.

In view of what had gone on before, Juninho's 38th minute goal was a little gem. Breaking

from midfield with those "quick feet" football people like to talk about, he made and scored a goal of pure craft. It made Derby's more direct methods look rather banal, and their methods did not alter greatly.

Asanovic remained their best hope of a goal, not least from set pieces. Roberts shovelled a first-half free kick round the post and watched another kick, in the second half, clear his crossbar. Ward might have scored from open play but Festa closed him down as he shot. Slog away as they did Derby never threatened Middlesbrough again.

With time running out, Ravanelli roamed from right to left, accepted Juninho's nice little pass and scored in the grand manner, like a man who has no doubts. This was Derby's last Cup tie at their evocative, now thoroughly ramshackle ground. They will not recall it with joy.

DERBY COUNTY (4-2-3-1): M Taylor — L Carsley, I Simpson, C Dally, C Powell — S Flynn (sub: G Bennett, 45min), P Trickle, D Powell (sub: P Simpson, 72) — R Willers, S Minto, M Galloway (sub: S A. Ward, A Asanovic). MIDDLESBROUGH (4-4-2): B Roberts — C Fleming, R Pearson, G Festa, C Beck — P Simpson, C Hignett, R Minto, Juninho — M Beck, F Ravanelli. Referee: G Poll.

Wimbledon's virtues prevail as Wednesday are eliminated

Sheffield Wednesday.....0
Wimbledon.....2

By DAVID MADDOCK

IT IS time, once and for all, to put aside this nonsense of Wimbledon being ramshackle underdogs with a spirit of amateur abandon. If this ultimately comprehensive FA Cup quarter-final victory over Sheffield Wednesday has proved anything, it is the sheer professionalism of the club these days.

In Joe Kinnear they have a wily manager with a keen sense of direction. Their league position is evidence enough of their quality. What Wimbledon do not have is a strength in depth to win the FA Carling Premiership, but Kinnear knows they can win a cup, and in recent weeks he has clearly pursued that ambition to the detriment of all other objectives.

Forget his entreaties of modesty, that his side is failing at the end of an exhausting race. He even dared to repeat such a claim after this victory, but the reality was very different. Wimbledon were too strong,

too powerful, too determined and simply too good for their surprisingly subdued opponents.

From the early moments of the tie, a sneaking suspicion was aroused that Wimbledon would lose only if they were careless enough to allow Wednesday an escape their performance did not deserve. Wimbledon dominated and created enough chances to have won the match three times over before their opponents gained even a corner.

That Wimbledon did not take one of those chances until the 74th minute at least made a contest of it.

No fewer than six presentable opportunities were declined by the hour, notably by the forwards, Gayle and Ekoku. Wednesday, on the ropes, were not dispatched and began to sense the potential for a knockout blow.

The next ten minutes decided the game. Hirst, a first-half substitute, was the Sheffield club's one creative influence of note and as he found a persuasive rhythm — conjured up from the depths of discontent at his original omission perhaps — Wednesday finally created chances.

There were two glorious opportunities, both woefully spurned. First, after 65 minutes Hirst ran 50 yards into the penalty area and rolled the ball into Booth's path with the goal gaping. But Booth missed.

Five minutes later and Wednesday committed a crime that would not go unpunished. This time Hirst took the ball in midfield and curled a delicious pass to Carbone, who produced a similar sense of adventure to find Whittingham inside the penalty area. He did everything right by coolly beating a defender to find space, but then sent the ball the wrong side of the upright.

It was Robbie Earle, fittingly, who did the punishing. Earle is the Carling Player of the Month, has scored in every round of this competition so far, and at 32 has even forced himself into the England picture. No wonder.

Sixteen minutes from the end he raced onto Gayle's intelligent flick on the edge of the penalty area and smashed

the ball joyfully into the roof of the net.

There was no coming back for Wednesday, who could perhaps claim that the first half loss of Newsome and Hyde with serious leg injuries, helped their cause not one jot. In the final seconds Holdsworth, a Wimbledon substitute, was found in space in the penalty area by the impressive Leonhardson and he finished well.

The south London club must now face Chelsea in the semi-final and it will certainly be a sterner test than this. But as Earle said afterwards: "When you have beaten Manchester United in this competition, you are afraid of no one." These days it is Wimbledon who make opponents afraid.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (4-4-2): K Pearson — S Nicol, J Newsome (sub: Humphreys, 13min), D Walker, I Nolan — G Whittingham, G Hyde (sub: D Hirst, 30), P Atkinson, M Pennington — S Carbone, Booth. WIMBLEDON (4-4-2): N Sullivan — K Cunningham, G Pugh, D Blackwood, Earle — M Ashley, V Jones, R Earle, J Leonhardson, B Ekoku (sub: D Holdsworth, 80), M Gayle (sub: D McAlister, 80). Referee: L Dallas.

Sunday service provides mass appeal at Saltergate

Sunday is coming to life weekly. A small queue forms outside the laundrette, dogs are walked on scrubby expanses of grass, people leave shops carrying loaves and milk.

Sunday morning in Chesterfield is much like Sunday morning anywhere in provincial England. It is a half-asleep time. The curtains are drawn and the streets not yet aired. Almost 7,000 Sundays have passed in this way since the formation of Chesterfield Town FC in 1866. Yesterday there were pertinent hints that Sunday March 9, 1997, was going to be different. Very different. The young man at the entrance to Chesterfield Baptist Church's car park was looking anxious. He danced from foot to foot and held up his arm to stop the flow of traffic.

"Sorry about this," he said. "Are you church or football?" If the answer was the latter, there was no more room — the true believers were short of parking space.

Middle-aged men, their faces drawn and tired, solicited at the approach to every turnstile. "Got a spare ticket, mate?" These were not touts. They were too earnest. Too haunted. They were fans

caught out by the wave of glamour that had made tickets as scarce as churches with crooked spires.

Inside Saltergate there was further evidence of the uniqueness of the day. The numbers gave the game away — four mascots, four programme sponsors, and three match sponsors.

Before the teams took to the pitch the Chesterfield club song, recorded to celebrate their FA Cup run, was played. There is a tacit ruling that a club's success shall be proportional to the ghastliness of its official song. If the Wrexham team had heard *We Can Build Our Dreams* they might have barricaded themselves into their dressing-room, such was its sinister banality.

Much had been made of two teams from the Nationwide League second division reaching an FA Cup quarter-final, but this was, in fact, a game typical of the division from which it would usually emanate.

Wrexham were by far the better side in the first half and suggested they would be the more becoming ambassadors of their division. Their football was neat and thoughtful and for a good while beyond

Mark Hodgkinson on the uplifting nature of Chesterfield's 1-0 win over Wrexham

the ken of Chesterfield's blood-and-thunder approach. Ward, in midfield, was particularly outstanding, piecing moves together from just beyond the centre circle, but for all Wrexham's possession, they did not create any gilded opportunities.

Chesterfield, though they will be much romanticised in the coming weeks, play it rough. Andy Morris is 6ft 5in tall and more than 15 stone in weight. Inevitably, Chesterfield are fond of launching the ball his way and he usually obliges with a knock-down or



Ward, left, Hughes and Russell fail to shake Beaumont off the ball. Photograph: Mike Egerton / Empics

barnstorming run towards goal.

One hopeful job collided with Morris's shin and bounced into the path of Beaumont. Elbows and knees were set in motion as Beaumont tussled for the ball with Brace. The defender held his territory for a second or two and beseeched his goalkeeper, Marriott, to come forward and collect. Marriott played still. Beaumont set the moment and lifted it over his head. It was, one imagined, the kind of goal that is seen regularly at Saltergate.

Wrexham pressed forward but their play was fractured, made desperate by the situation. Chesterfield fans danced on the rooftops around the ground and the sun broke free of the haze to bathe the small ground. A pitch invasion was almost mandatory and it duly arrived. Players were held aloft, fans jiggered on the turf, and it was difficult to remain unmoved by the unbridled joy arriving unexpectedly in a small town in the middle of England.

The draw for the semi-final of the FA Cup will be made later today, the man on the public-address system said. Then, after a short pause, he added, almost as if he were

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4/5 LIVERPOOL 9/4 DRAW NEWCASTLE 3/1
Anfield, Kick-off 8.00pm, Live on SKY.

CORRECT SCORE

6/1 LIVERPOOL 1-0	11/2 DRAW	1-1
15/2 LIVERPOOL 2-0	14/1 DRAW	2-2
15/2 LIVERPOOL 2-1	9/1 NEWCASTLE 1-0	
12/1 LIVERPOOL 3-1	14/1 NEWCASTLE 2-1	

Other scores on request.

FIRST GOALSCORER

4/1 FOWLER (L)	14/1 REDKNAPP (L)
6/1 COLLYMORE (L)	14/1 GINOLA (N)
7/1 ASPRILLA (N)	16/1 THOMAS (L)
10/1 LEE (N)	20/1 BARNES (L)

Own goals do not count. Other players on request. Prices correct at time of going to press 7.3.97.

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Southampton, 7 for Torquay) 18: D Darby (Hull)
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Baskell (Brighton) 14: S White (Cardiff), D Roberts
(Arlington)

shrubland	30	5	2	8	17	22	3	7	5	18	28	33
scrubland & D	30	3	6	5	17	20	4	2	10	25	30	29
with	33	6	3	7	17	22	1	5	11	19	47	29
grassland	33	5	3	7	23	25	3	1	14	9	31	28

2	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
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[illegible]

Montrose	27	7	3	4	21	18	6	16	10	-9
Queen's Park	28	5	2	8	18	22	21	16	20	-3
Gowdounburgh	28	5	4	3	6	5	10	20	39	-6
Ardroon	28	4	4	8	16	18	7	17	22	-23
East Stirling	28	4	4	7	18	22	4	10	18	-13
	28	4	3	8	15	21	2	4	9	-18

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FOOTBALL: DRAW ENABLES PORT VALE TO MAINTAIN PURSUIT OF PLAY-OFFS

Frustrated Norwich fall foul of Aspin

Norwich City 1
Port Vale 1

BY DAVID MILLER

PORT Vale's persistent form away from home with a 4-5-1 formation has put them close to the play-off positions for promotion to the FA Carling Premiership. On Saturday they held Norwich City at Carrow Road, yet were fortunate that neither referee nor linesmen saw any of the half-dozen offences committed by Neil Aspin, the Port Vale captain, that should have resulted in penalties.

Throughout football nowadays, domestic and international, defenders regularly remain undetected — or, more probably, the offences are ignored because they are so prevalent — when wrestling opponents to prevent them from reaching the ball, usually when some distance away from it. Whenever Norwich had a corner or a free kick within range of the penalty area, Aspin, sinister in appearance with his blond, shaven head and bowed legs, would lock his arms around the waist or chest of either Jackson or Scott, the tall Norwich defenders, when they advanced into the area for the kick.

This shameless infringement may not have affected the result of a match that Norwich dominated territorially but seldom tactically. In every other respect, Vale were worthy of their draw, which gave them four points from two meetings with Norwich, now lying fifth in the Nationwide League first division, four points ahead of Vale, who are two places off a play-off position.

Although Vale have won seven and drawn six of 19 away matches, their aggregate

goals home and away reflect their cautious formation. Together with Norwich, they have the lowest goal difference among the leading eight clubs.

John Rudge, the Vale manager for 13 seasons, has achieved much at such a low-budget club and it will be a pity if the sale of Guppy to Leicester City for £850,000 robs him and the club of a chance in the play-offs. Rudge is one of those relatively unsung managers, such as Jim Smith, and, in earlier days, Dave Bowen and Jimmy Sirrel, who pour an ocean of intelligence into the lower divisions for scant reward. Rudge is within arm's length of lifting Vale from bottom division to top, as did Bowen with Northampton Town.

Part of the success is based on width, that too often ignored principle that Guppy and McCarthy exploited so tellingly. Koordes, from Telstar, in Holland, is still finding his feet after two matches as Guppy's replacement, but McCarthy might have won the match.

Norwich play with a 3-5-2 formation, the useful Scott being a recent acquisition when near-derelict at Tottenham Hotspur. However, Vale repeatedly caught the opposing rearguard square with rapid counter-attacks from midfield, and misjudgments by Marshall in goal should have given Vale the lead and did bring them the equaliser. Marshall, acclaimed by the Norwich public, recently replaced the long-serving Gunn. Early on, one of Norwich's quick inter-passing moves foundered and Talbot swept the ball across field to McCarthy, who raced clear. Marshall advanced late to a ball that he would never reach and McCarthy's lob flew just wide of the empty net.

Minutes later, Eadie, whose



Jackson celebrates after giving Norwich the lead at Carrow Road on Saturday

pace constantly unnerved Vale, forced a corner on the left. Roccade's inswinging was headed home on the near post by Jackson, with Aspin's arms for once absent.

When Aspin did haul Fleck to the ground at a free kick not long afterwards, Jackson somehow shot over the bar from five yards. Two minutes later Marshall once more advanced ill-advisedly, this time towards a through-pass

from the astute Bogie, but McCarthy's shot was accurate.

Although the finishing by both teams left a lot to be desired, the quality of the play was commendable throughout. Vale showed themselves able to match Norwich for sophistication early on and then had the resolution to stifle the home team with more physical challenges as Norwich got the upper hand

in the second half. Mike Walker, after his abortive sortie to Goodison Park, is once again producing a side at Carrow Road that is pleasing on the eye for those looking for football.

NORWICH CITY (3-5-2): Marshall — R Newman, M Jackson, S Scott — N Adams, D Roccade (subs: C Sanderson, S Smith, C Crook (subs: S Camp, 67), D Smith, M Miligan — D Eadie, R Fleck. **PORT VALE (4-5-1):** P McManis — A Hill, N Aspin, D Glover, A Tarnard — J McCarthy, A Porter, I Bogie, S Talbot, R Goodier — A Newby (subs: L Mills, 55). Referee: P Taylor.

Ipswich are inspired by Taricco's all-round excellence

Stoke City 0
Ipswich Town 1

BY NICK SZCZEPANIK

IT COULD have been the worst of times to assess the credentials of Ipswich Town, who were without four key players for a tricky away game against a team only one point below them.

In the event it was the best of times, as they overcame the absence with ease to move into sixth place in the Nationwide League first division after a more commanding display than the score suggests.

A "good performance," George Burley, the Ipswich manager, said. "We played some nice football and deserved the three points. Yes, we had four players out, but I don't think it showed; others came in and did well. If we get any more injuries, we'll be stretched, but we're moving up the league nicely."

The goal in the seventh minute, was, oddly, one of the few moments when Ipswich did not look completely in control. Vaughan seemed surprised when Sommer's free kick reached him, but not as surprised as the Stoke defenders when his prod at goal found Taricco, in splendid isolation, side-footing the ball home.

As Stoke's confidence ebbed, Ipswich dominated, winning every tackle and claiming every loose ball. Taricco, their outstanding player, gave an exemplary demonstration of wing-back play. The Argentinian was sure in defence and went forward to telling effect, notably when his cross found Milton, whose well-judged lob was headed off the line by Whittle.

Failure to add to their lead despite two efforts from Scowcroft, well saved by Muggleton, put Ipswich

STOKE CITY (3-5-2): Marshall — R Newman, M Jackson, S Scott — N Adams, D Roccade (subs: C Sanderson, S Smith, C Crook (subs: S Camp, 67), D Smith, M Miligan — D Eadie, R Fleck. **PORT VALE (4-5-1):** P McManis — A Hill, N Aspin, D Glover, A Tarnard — J McCarthy, A Porter, I Bogie, S Talbot, R Goodier — A Newby (subs: L Mills, 55). Referee: P Taylor.



Taricco: outstanding

under needless pressure as Stoke staged a late rally, but Mowbray, the Ipswich club captain, returning to the centre of defence after long spells of injury, was inspirational.

"It was nice to be back," he admitted. "I'm a footballer and I've missed Saturday afternoons. You want to play, but the team's doing well and there was no reason to change it. So well, in fact, that Ipswich, unbeaten in ten games, look a good bet for a play-off place, as Macari acknowledged."

"They've always been regarded as a good team, but they've taken a while to catch fire," he said. And Stoke? "Things weren't going right for us today, but sometimes you have to make things go for you, which we did not do."

Finally, a word for the referee, whose willingness to let play flow made for an entertaining game, even if the Stoke supporters did not like the fact that it allowed Ipswich to take the lead. But then if a man named Wolstenholme cannot be relied on to set the tone, who can?

STOKE CITY (4-4-2): C Muggleton — A Patterson, S Davis, L Spurgeon, A Griffin — M McManis (subs: K Nyman, 70min), G Keworth, P Wilson (subs: S Rodger, 70, D Williams, M Taricco, R Nayor (subs: N Gregory, 53), J Scowcroft. Referee: C Wolstenholme.

Coppell keeps cool as Palace nerves shatter

Charlton Athletic 2
Crystal Palace 1

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

STEVE COPPELL survived only 33 days at Manchester City before leaving, an apparently tortured soul, for reasons of a darkly psychological nature. A few more displays similar to that on Saturday, when his Crystal Palace side succumbed meekly to Charlton Athletic at The Valley, and he could conceivably set another short-stay record.

Outwardly, at least, Coppell retained a calm manner, as Palace huffed and puffed their way to defeat. He leant on the visitors' dug out or perched inside, chewing gum and contemplating, as Ray Lewington, his first-team coach, regularly worked himself into a lather. Only rarely did Coppell show any emotion.

Inwardly, after little more than a week and three matches back in management, Coppell must have been seething — at Palace's poor finishing, lack of imagination and general apathy. At the after-match inquest, still contemplating, still chewing, he maintained a dignified stance. Though Palace had slipped from the Nationwide League first division play-off places, he showed no signs of post-traumatic stress.

Palace had beaten Oxford United 4-1 away, drawn at home to Bolton Wanderers, the runaway leaders, having been denied victory only by a last-minute equaliser, and lost to Charlton, their southeast London rivals. About par for the course, nothing to get too excited about. "We were second best from the first whistle," Coppell said. "Charlton were quicker to the ball, anticipated better and deserved their victory."

"We've had three games in a week and possibly gone through the whole spectrum of what we are capable of. We've got 11 matches left and cannot afford too many more defeats. We have to get to be more resilient, more combative, when we are not playing well."

apart from intermittent bursts from the abrasive Hopkin in midfield and persistent Dyer up front.

Charlton, led by the irrepressible Robinson, thoroughly merited their first success against Palace in 11 years.

"We always seem to do all right against them but never win," Alan Curbishley, the Charlton manager, said. "Quite honestly, I wouldn't have minded a scrappy 1-0 victory thanks to a controversial penalty and having played rubbish. The win was sweet, though, and sweeter because of the way we performed."

Charlton went ahead through Lee, on loan from Nottingham Forest, in the 55th minute; he met Robinson's free kick with a firm nod of his now pineapple-less head. Six

Brighton and Leyton Orient could be hailed before the Football Association after crowd trouble at the Goldstone Ground on Saturday. The Nationwide League third division match was held up for four minutes in the second half when home supporters ran onto the pitch and one allegedly attacked Scott McGleish after he had scored for Orient in the 4-4 draw. The FA has promised to investigate alleged incitement from the Orient players.

minutes later Palace equalised from a replica set-piece when Dyer glanced in a free kick from Roberts.

Another nine minutes on, Charlton settled it. O'Connell's job hit the junction of post and crossbar, as Newsham watched, and Robinson thumped in the rebound under the still transfixed goalkeeper. Not quite bad enough for Coppell to call it a day but who knows what lurks beneath the Palace manager's serene exterior?

CHARLTON ATHLETIC (3-4-2): A Patterson — G Poole, R Pugh, S Brown — Newton, S O'Connell, M Smith, J Robinson, A Barnes — C Lamborn, J Lee. **CRYSTAL PALACE (3-4-3):** C Meach — D Tully (subs: R Quinn, 70min), M Edwards, A Lingham — K Muesel, D Hopson, A Roberts, D Gordon — B Dyer, N Shippey (subs: C Veat, 74), D Freeman (subs: G Nash, 74). Referee: N Bury.

Motherwell face test of resolve

KEVIN MCCARRA



Scottish commentary

Examining the entrails of a chicken can make a mess of the carpet and casting yarrow stalks carries regrettable echoes of the 1960s. Even so, the craving for a peek at the future is hard to eradicate. For a football manager, the Tennents Scottish Cup is rich territory in which to go scouting for portents.

A tie in a knockout tournament may try a team severely and so measure its prospects. Alex McLeish is accordingly left to hope that the quarter-final at Tannadice on Saturday was giving a fairly reading. The 4-1 defeat by Dundee United did suggest that he is in charge of a wan side.

Removal from the Cup was dispiriting, but it also raised questions over the resolve that Motherwell will carry into the final weeks of the Bell's Scottish League premier division season. The Lanarkshire club is unlikely to be last, but it must also veer away from ninth place and the relegation play-off.

After the match with United, McLeish observed that Motherwell had given a Jekyll and Hyde performance and it may seem that the facts endorse his opinion, since the first half ended goalless. In reality, though, his players were never capable of poise or menace and their resistance petered out long before the end.

In its hairy-handed lack of refinement, Motherwell's afternoon was entirely the work of Mr Hyde. It is not so long since this club was regarded as a model of frugal sophistication and the team finished second in the league as recently as 1995.

If Motherwell now look anaemic, the explanation is hardly elusive. The Bosman ruling has bled them with the zeal of an 18th-century quack. They might be pleased by the sight of Paul Lambert appearing for Borussia Dortmund in the European Cup or the news that Rob McKinnon is making an impression at Twente. Eschewed, but while hearts may swell with pride the bank balance was not expanded at all.

No transfer fee was paid for either man and Motherwell do not have the means to replace their expertise. At present, though, there are counterparts who regard with glee the

change in the contract system. Dundee United, too, will find themselves plundered one day, but for the moment there is only the joy of knowing that two of their three Scandinavian signings, Lars Zetterlund and Erik Pedersen, cost nothing. With their arrival, experience has been embedded in the team, but the trucking before foreigners can be overcome.

On Saturday, three of the United goals came from young, Scottish players, Andy McLaren and Robbie Winters, who have been schooled at Tannadice. Tommy McLean's side, with 12 victories and two draws in its past 14 matches, is the outcome of convergence. By separate routes, these footballers have arrived at a common effectiveness.

McLean is cunning, but chance too has worked in his favour. A defender such as Steven Pressley may simply have reached an age when he can draw conclusions from his experiences. With Rangers, he appeared in some important games and even when he was no longer required there was a move to Coventry City.

At Highfield Road, the centre half again failed to make himself indispensable, but being forgotten at Tannadice gave him privacy in which to mature and it is possible once more to think of him as a Scotland international of the future. Some transformations are even quicker.

Falkirk defeated Raith Rovers 2-0 on Saturday and vaulted from the first division into the last four of the cup. They are joined in the draw today by Kilmarnock, 5-2 winners at Morton. In beating Rangers on Thursday, however, Celtic were first to reach the semi-finals and it is now expected that they will still be ahead of all rivals at the very end of this tournament.

Cardiff put Kilcline in an old spin

Mansfield Town 1
Cardiff City 3

BY RICHARD HOBSON

THOSE with the task of finding exhibits for the new National Museum of Football in Preston should have been at Field Mill on Saturday. Brian Kilcline, of Mansfield Town, must be preserved as an example of a type of player becoming extinct as the game adapts to European trends.

Gone are the days when every side had such a "killer", a big, burly stopper with a fearsome glare and granite forehead guaranteed to win everything in the air and not worried about the finer techniques of passing. Modern hatteries breed defenders with a lower centre of gravity who can turn quickly.

Times change, as Kilcline may well have reflected as Simon Haworth, with his back to goal, spun through 180° to commit the surprised defender, who looked like a congenial cartoon giant who had lost sight of the child he was supposed to be protecting. He just about turned in time to see Haworth cross to a substitute, headed in unmarked after 76 minutes to seal victory.

At 34, Kilcline, is a footballing W. G. Grace. Less is known of 19-year-old Haworth, but that may change. Kenny Hibbitt, the Cardiff director of football, speaks proudly of the number of scouts watching his side. "We do not want to sell our best players," he said. "But equally I would be delighted if they went on to better things."

Victory ensured that Cardiff remain seventh, the final play-off place, in the Nationwide League third division. Haworth put them ahead in the 29th minute when he met a through-ball from Craig Middleton with a precise flick. Warren Hackett equalised after 54 minutes but Gareth Stoker's shot restored the lead ten minutes later.

MANSFIELD TOWN (3-5-2): 1 Bowling — B Kilcline, S Easdale, W Jackson — T Ford, B Sanderson (subs: J Walker, 70min), J Doole, D Clarke, S Hargreaves — I Christie, S Hedley (subs: S Wood, 55). **CARDIFF CITY (4-4-2):** 1 Elliot — J Perry, J Eckhardt (subs: J Jamieson, 24), G Davies, T Phillips — S Fowler, G Stoker, C Middleton, S Pinnock (subs: J Harte, 56), S White (subs: C Davis, 69), S Hargreaves. Referee: C Foy.

Docherty reviving Millwall's spirit

Luton Town 0
Millwall 2

BY PAT GIBSON

JOHN DOCHERTY was not planning to return to the game. In his middle fifties, with a stroke already behind him, he did not need the hassle. The golf course was more inviting.

Then Millwall called. They remembered him as the manager who led them into the old first division in 1997-98 and, with the club £10 million in debt, shares suspended at a derisory 4p and the administrators called in, they thought he was the man to see them through the crisis.

It looks as though they were right. Four wins and a draw later, Millwall are now level on points with Luton Town in second place in the Nationwide League second division and potential investors are beginning to show interest.

Not that Docherty concerns himself with the financial side of the equation. "The players have got to put that to the back of their minds," he said. "And so do I. They are professional footballers and they owe it to themselves to go out and earn their living and prove that they can play in the face of any adversity. That is what they are doing for me."

The spirit, the will to win, which was palpably lacking when they were losing six of their last seven games under the departed Jimmy Nicoll, was there for all to see at Kenilworth Road as they withstood everything Luton threw at them and then won the game with two superbly taken goals.

Docherty, who had been out of League football since leaving Bradford City more than five years ago, would not have come back for any other club.

"Bu Millwall have got a special place in the old heart," he said. "What I missed was the relationships and the rapport you get from being with players on a day-to-day basis, passing on your knowledge and seeing them respond."

And how they are responding. "Not our day is the phrase that springs to mind," Lennie Lawrence, the Luton manager, said, reasonably enough. Although without James from the 25th minute — he was sent off for a second bookable offence — Luton still contrived to hit the woodwork four times and have two more efforts cleared off the line.

None of that, however, should detract from Millwall's resilience or the quality of their goals, the first exquisitely curled in by Dolby from a free kick in the 78th minute, the second flashed past Feuer by Hartley two minutes from time.

LUTON TOWN (4-4-2): 1 Feuer — D Patterson, S Davis, M Johnson, J James — G Alexander, G Woodcock (subs: P McLane, S Brown, C Hughes (subs: D Marshall, 53), P Shewler — D O'Neil (subs: K Grant, 80), A Thorpe. **MILLWALL (4-4-2):** 1 Carter — L Moll, A Worr — A McLean, G Berry — P Hartley, M Doyle, D Savage, S Rodger (subs: H Sadler, 54) — S Crawford, A Dolby. Referee: G Frankland.

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Booking rides is a cutthroat business. Andrew Longmore on a race with few rules

Special agents who must know the form

When the clatter of the board clicks and the action finally rolls tomorrow afternoon, the two men who have done most to shape the Cheltenham Festival this year will sigh with relief and bury their heads in the form for the meetings at Lingfield and Thuxton on Saturday. Barring the odd last-minute hitch, their jobs are done, their jockeys installed and only the praise or the recriminations lie ahead. "The last two weeks have been a nightmare," Robert Parsons said. "To be honest, I've had enough of Cheltenham."

Parsons is agent for Richard Dunwoody, which makes him public enemy No 1 in the weighing-room. Dunwoody's stature as a jockey and his just for winners find expression in

Parsons's relentless quest for the best rides. Together they test the allegiance of owners and trainers to their jockeys in a way once considered ungentlemanly. At Cheltenham, when the prizes are so much greater, the competition is cutthroat.

"You can be changing next to someone every day, be perfectly pleasant and know damn well that he's been trying to kick your rides that morning," Jamie Osborne, one of the few top jockeys who does not employ an agent, said. "But it's accepted now. There are a lot more freelance jockeys, so if you don't try to get the rides, someone else will."

Two weeks ago, Dave Roberts was putting the finishing touches to a handsome Festival portfolio for Adrian Maguire. The following morning he was ringing trainers to offer substitutes after Maguire had been ruled out of Cheltenham for the third year in succession by a broken arm. His rivals sensed a field day.

Roberts runs the most formidable stable of jump jockeys in the country from behind a desk in an elegant town house on the borders of Reigate and Redhill in Surrey. His tally of winners for the season stands at just over 150; he once booked 17 winners in a day.

Tony McCoy, the champion, Norman Williamson, Richard Johnson and Mick Fitzgerald are all his and an annual phone bill of £7,000 is proof of



Roberts represents a strong team, including McCoy, Maguire, Williamson and Fitzgerald. "You feel responsible for every ride they're on"

the value he gives for his ten per cent.

Maguire's injury released a host of prized rides for David Nicholson onto the open market and the task of filling them was complicated by the fact that no one wanted to be seen to profit too hastily from the popular Irishman's misfortune. That night, Roberts rang Nicholson to clear up the rides for the following day. They talked loosely of Cheltenham, but agreed to talk again in more detail the next day.

The "Duke", as he is universally known, is not someone to be messed with. No amount of badgering will persuade him to change his mind. Just the opposite, in fact, Roberts knew his man and played it cool, which is one of the hidden skills of the agent.

But Nicholson acted fast. By 8.30 that night, he had rung Parsons to offer Dunwoody, his former stable jockey, the plum rides on Mulligan in the Guinness Arkle Trophy and Viking Flagship in the Queen Mother Chase. It was not that easy. Dunwoody was committed to riding Caltaba for Charlie Mann in the Arkle. Parsons did not have to consult his precious *Timeform*

ratings nor Dunwoody to know which was the better ride. He rang Mann.

"It was a very difficult situation," Parsons said. "If Charlie had stood his ground and been adamant that Richard would not get off his horse, then we might have had to reconsider. But he said he was

disappointed, in pretty strong terms, and that was it. I just have to be as diplomatic as possible, but I get some terrible abuse sometimes." The ultimate threat is that a trainer will never use a jockey's services again. Sometimes there is no solution. Choosing to ride One Man at Ascot recently

angered the connections of Sound Man, another of Dunwoody's regular rides.

From his isolated cottage in Lambourn, Osborne had also sent an overnight fax to Nicholson detailing his own availability and was rewarded with the ride on L'Opera in the Triumph Hurdle. Another

agent was not so lucky. He called late at night and received the full force of the Duke's notoriously short temper. Roberts was disappointed not to get McCoy on Viking Flagship and Williamson on Mulligan, pleased that the talented Johnson had picked up some good rides as Nicholson's No 2 stable jockey.

"Tony had won on Viking Flagship at Aintree and Norman has ridden winners at the Festival for the owners of Mulligan, but you just have to take it on the chin. I'll never say to a trainer: 'My jockey must ride this'. I'll just say 'X is available'. You have to see a jockey fall because next time it could be one of yours, but when you hear a jockey might be out for a week, it's your job to ring up and get on his rides. Robert was not out of order to ring. It's business."

There aren't many rules. You've got to be aware of what's going on. Certain trainers won't use certain jockeys and there's no point in ringing them up because you'll just get their backs up. You get to know a trainer's way of doing things. Ninety per cent of people in racing are pretty loyal. If a jockey has won on a spare ride, 95 per cent of the



Parsons has maintained a relentless quest for the best rides for Dunwoody

time it is his ride again next time."

On those grounds, Parsons's overtures for Strong Promise in the Queen Mother, which Williamson had won on at Ascot, were deemed underhand. "If Richard Dunwoody has not got a ride, he feels in a position to ride anything," Roberts said. "But it's not the way I do it."

Roberts and Parsons are old rivals. In the 1993-94 season, they primed the guns in the epic duel for the jockeys' title, which Dunwoody finally won by 197 to 194 over Maguire. They have never met, but their respect for each other's professionalism is mutual. When the five-day declarations come out on Festival at 1.30pm, two phones will be simultaneously lifted in Lambourn and Surrey. It is an obsession,

'I try to be diplomatic but I get some terrible abuse at times'

which both feel and neither can quite understand.

Parsons usually takes the final decision on which horse Dunwoody should ride. "Then I get rollicked if I get it wrong," he said. That Dunwoody has earned more than £700,000 in prize-money this season, with only Osborne ahead of him on that count, suggests the judgment is sound more often than not. Roberts merely recommends rides. "Because of the risks of jump racing, you feel responsible for every ride they're on. If one of your jockeys falls, the first thing that goes through your mind is 'Should he be riding that?' But, in the end, it's their decision."

When Richard Davis was killed after a fall at Southwell, Roberts had to stifle the guilt from his sadness. Davis was one of his jockeys. "All the other jockeys rang up and said it wasn't my fault. Richard had schooled the horse and wanted to ride it. But I still felt responsible. I nearly packed it in there and then."

Seeing horses which Richard used to ride still reminds him of the day. Just as it is for everyone else in jump racing, Cheltenham is the litmus test for the agents, who have been scheming for months to get their jockeys on the best horses. Roberts says that he is able to name 99 per cent of the jockeys in advance without looking. "It's the one per cent you're after. If I nick one of Roberts's rides, he'll think: 'Damn that Dave Roberts', and ditto the other way around. But, in the end, we're only a voice on the phone for someone else."

Novice rider killed at Charing

POINT-TO-POINT
BY CARL EVANS

GILES HOPPER, an apprentice farrier, died after a fall while riding at the South East Hunts Club meeting at Charing on Saturday.

Riding The Mill Height, a spare ride in the opening restricted race, Hopper, 21, was thrown from his horse at the second fence when it propped on landing. Paramedics, standing by the fence, were at his side within seconds and treated him for severe neck injuries. He was pronounced dead on arrival at Ashford Hospital.

He is the fifth rider to die in a point-to-point since 1980 and the ninth fatality in all forms of racing in the past 12 years. Hopper had been given the ride only an hour before the race. A novice, with just three winners and some 65 rides over two seasons behind him, Hopper rang owner-trainer Kevin Tork at his home near Reigate on Friday evening asking for the mount. He was told it was not available, but was allowed to deputise when the planned rider's medical book was found to be out of date on arrival at the course.

Local stewards held an inquiry after the race and decided no blame could be attached to other horses or riders. The rest of the meeting was abandoned and a report is being sent to Portman Square. The Jockey Club will look into medical procedure and the layout of the course.

"They will pay particular attention to the second fence, which has had a high rate of falls in previous meetings. One senior rider, Tim McCarthy, yesterday described it as 'too narrow', and a difficult fence when horses are pulling for their heads at the start of a race. Tork claimed he warned Hopper to 'keep an eye' on the fence."

Hopper's death is a particularly sad loss for his parents, Harry, a Ramsgate bus driver, and Jackie, and brother Oliver. However, the young rider loved racing and accepted the risks.

So does Darren Howells, whose 12 previous rides, all on Gt Hayes Potomard, had failed to achieve a completion, resulting in some shocking falls. At the Avon Vale on Saturday, Howells was able to keep the partnership going and won the hunt race, at the rewarding odds of 50-1.

Homework suggests Istabraq will provide correct answer

By OUR IRISH RACING CORRESPONDENT

THERE is no mistaking Irish confidence going into the Cheltenham Festival, although it may be asking too much for a repeat of last year's record-equalling seven winners when Withers Or Which and Elegant Lord shone out as bankers. This time there are no such beacons to guide backers, but any number of Irish horses have the potential to emerge as stars.

The closest to an Irish banker will be Istabraq in the Royal Sun Alliance Hurdle, despite his warm-up victory at Leopardstown raising as many questions as it answered. A neck defeat of his tenderly ridden stable companion, Finnegan's Hollow, coupled with some slow jumping, impressed few. However, a more impressive Istabraq is expected to be on view on Wednesday.

His homework has reportedly thrilled connections since Leopardstown and Charlie Swan, who has twice won the Sun Alliance, will not hear of him being beaten. As for his jumping, expect Istabraq to be much better with a guaranteed fast pace to concentrate his mind. Aidan O'Brien's horse is hard to oppose.

Swan has an excellent chance of winning his first Champion Hurdle on a horse whose quality has also yet to be fully appreciated. I'm Supposin is the latest high-class Flat horse to make the leap to possible Champion Hurdle glory, but few can have shown such a natural aptitude for hurdling. Kevin Prendergast's charge schooled brilliantly from the start and his two successes in novice company were exhibitions of poise and accuracy.

Importantly, in a race in which many of the leading contenders need specific conditions to be at their best, he is an uncomplicated horse who goes on any ground and is battle-hardened enough from the Flat to overcome his relative inexperience. Prendergast has made no secret of his enthusiasm for I'm Supposin's chance and the five-year-old looks a more potent weapon than Space Truckster.

Finnegan's Hollow ran second to I'm Supposin at Naas



Prendergast enthusiasm

in January and, on that form, will be fancied for the Citroen Supreme Novices' Hurdle. However, he is worth opposing. A horse who has broken blood vessels is not one to depend upon up to the final hill. A better each-way option may be Graphie Equaliser, trained by Frank Lacy.

On tomorrow's opening day, the other Irish horse to keep an eye on is Miltonfield in the concluding Hamlet Cigars Gold Card final. Never one to win by too far, the Irish

Cesarewitch winner possesses a formidable burst of speed and looks well handicapped. Klairon Davis attempts to repeat last year's win in the Champion Chase but may be foiled by good ground. The home team, headed by Strong Promise and Viking Flagship, look too strong for him.

Corker's quick and accurate jumping will make him an attractive each-way prospect in the Royal Sun Alliance Chase but it is in the Festival Bumper that many more Irish punts will be risked. Florida Pearl has been the most publicised Irish runner but throw in the likes of Fawn Prince and All The Colours and the Irish team has strength in depth.

However, Dermot Weld is becoming increasingly confident that in Musical Mayhem he has a horse with speed enough to win. He can be proved correct.

On Thursday, the Irish will gear themselves for unprecedented scenes if Danoli wins the Gold Cup, but a combination of the downhill fences and a front-running battle with Dublin Flyer is likely to spoil the party. It is difficult to see Imperial Call winning the Gold Cup again after such an interrupted season, leaving Dorcas Pride as the best Irish prospect. That belief will grow stronger if the ground has some cut.

Ted Walsh's Commanche Court will also need rain to play a part in the Triumph Hurdle and, in the circumstances, Stylish Allure could be best of the Irish. However, in a race as full of possible winners as ever, the home team looks to hold the stronger hand.

POINT-TO-POINT RESULTS

<p>AVON VALE (Barbury Castle): Midn 1, 1, Sunan Of Swing (Miss P. Curran, 9-4 fav), 2, Cane Valley, 3, Lumen 15 ran. Heat 1, 1, 2, Hayes, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.</p>	<p>NORTH LEBURY (Updon-On-Sewer): Hunt 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.</p>
<p>BRECON & TALYBONT (Llantrisant): Hunt 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.</p>	<p>NORTH NORFOLK (Higham): Open Midn 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.</p>
<p>SOUTH CORNWALL (Great Trewen): Confined 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.</p>	<p>SOUTH EAST HUNTS CLUB (Charnock): Hunt 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.</p>

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Christopher Irvine begins a three-part series on the changing face of rugby league

Bullish marketing breaks Bradford mould



Deakin's approach has prompted a huge rise in Bradford's attendances and in merchandising revenue. Photograph: John Houlihan

According to geologists, the natural bowl at Odsal was gouged out during the fourth ice age. On a wretched morning, some permafrost apparently lingers. The former quarry at the top of the M606 has been a place of rugby league pilgrimage since Bradford Northern moved there in 1934. Nowadays, it is the epicentre of a new phenomenon, the loud, proud and conspicuously successful Bradford Bulls.

Weather permitting on Friday, Bradford will kick off a new rugby league summer at home to Warrington in the Stones Super League. Television cameramen need no reminding of the meteorological perils that can cause Odsal to fill up with fog whatever the time of year. More than one live broadcast has been disrupted. Last season, snow fell there on the opening day.

The biggest change to the place is not physical. No right-thinking person would have imagined 18 months ago that Bradford would be trendsetters. Fashion began and ended at a bobble hat and scarf: the hip place was where supporters might best make the referee hear the cry of "Gerromonside". The reason the profile of the average Bradford supporter has changed from a male over 40 to a young mother is straightforward. "It's about fun," Peter Deakin explained.

To those who see the world fun as heretical in sport, Deakin, the foremost example of a new breed of marketing

executive in rugby league, is unabashed. "We epitomise what Super League is all about - vibrant, young, glib," he said. "It's what some critics pompously think sport shouldn't be about. Why, then, have we doubled our crowds? We're as serious as any sports club in this country, but there has to be a sense of style."

Clichéd images of cloth caps and chimney-stacks were always ridiculously overplayed. But in replacing Northern with Bulls, Bradford addressed their main concern: a dying audience. Naturally, it offended certain sensibilities and drove some older supporters away, but their numbers have been replaced several-fold, mainly by families.

It is a conversion that has its roots in popular appeal. Stick-in-the-mud Bradford are suddenly the go-generators that others seek to imitate.

Deakin said: "My acid test was the retired schoolteacher who came to see me after the final game last season. She and her late husband were die-hard Northern supporters. She said she hated me, the new name, thought that music at matches would be corny and summer rugby daft. Now she said she was a Bulls fanatic and asked what on earth she'd do without matches for five months."

Bradford sought a niche market between the choreographed audience participation at ice hockey and the

numbers and atmosphere in football. When Deakin arrived at Bradford in 1995, after a five-year spell marketing different sports in the United States, he held up the Chicago Bulls basketball team as an example to follow. While some people laughed, Deakin and his team began to deliver. Club merchandise sales leapt from £70,000 to £500,000 last year.

Average home crowds increased from 4,400 to 10,350 last season; the target this year is 12,500. In the close season, 2,000 subscribed to a

TOMORROW

The woman at the helm at Paris Saint-Germain

new fan club. "Let's not kid ourselves that a lot of these new people understand rugby league," Deakin said. "They come because others have told them they've had a great time here. The first trick is to get people into your sport but the next is to get them to understand the culture of rugby league, so they become a follower for life."

Deakin, 43, talks of "positive mindset" and "re-positioning the image standpoint", but the marketing jargon sits comfortably with the naturally upbeat partner of the former policeman in nearby Brighouse and forward with Oldham. He has wooed blue-chip sponsors and convinced a sceptical public that league can be fashionable.

Which other club would get so many applications to be cheerleaders that it now wants to set up a dance school?

There are important lessons for the sport. "The Bulls are merely a vehicle for the promotion of rugby league," Deakin said. "We have to sell the sport as well as the club, because there is still so much ignorance about league out there. The sport has always short-changed itself. It has to start trusting and believing, because the game is a fantastic product."

Deakin is taking what he calls the "Manchester United approach". That means promoting league as the main summer sport in England and Bradford as the "nation's

team". Supporters are starting to come from as far as Scotland and Wales. Robbie Paul, the Bulls' young captain, from New Zealand, is Deakin's key card. His elfin face adorns all Bradford's publicity. "Chicago Bulls have Michael Jordan, Man United have Ryan Giggs and we've Robbie," he said. "The kid has got film-star status in this city."

Each Bradford player has his responsibilities in community and development work. The onus is on a caring approach. Paul's brief is the anti-drugs message in schools. Unless they wanted frostbite, no youngster used to hang around Odsal. Now the place is alive with autograph-hunters. It is an appeal more dramatic than can be expressed.

'We have to sell the sport as well as the club'

plained by an uplift in playing fortunes, or by a simple name change.

"Winning is everything for the coach and players, but if we suffer a significant loss, our fans don't desert us in droves because there's another reason for them to come," Deakin said. "Too often loyalty is taken for granted in British sport. Here we try to communicate with supporters, make them feel part and parcel of the club. The bottom line is fun."

If the fun is to continue at Bradford, then the development of Odsal, at a modest cost of \$9 million now that overambitious plans for a "superdome" appear to be doomed, must begin next year. Corporate hospitality does not go down so well in Forthraburn. In the meantime, Deakin will assemble his jugglers, fire-eaters, clowns, singers and face-painters and trust that Friday night remains fog, frost and snow free.

NETBALL

Essex girls provide a crucial test of new man

By a Correspondent

WHILE women referees are steadily infiltrating men's professional football - Wendy Toms, for instance, regularly runs the line in Nationwide League matches and takes charge of Vauxhall Conference fixtures - so male umpires are increasingly evident on the netball court.

Indeed, the key English Inter-Counties League encounter last week between Bedfordshire and Essex Metropolitan was umpired by a man, Dickon Adams. It also served as an "access test" for Adams, part of his assessment before possible appointment as only England's fifth international umpire. Coincidentally, or perhaps significantly, one of the present quartet is also male, Bill Alexander.

International umpiring is a prestigious role involving plenty of air miles. Alexander and his three English female counterparts are hoping to land a plum assignment in May, when New Zealand play host to an international series against Jamaica. Adams could provide extra competition.

New Zealand are pencilled in for a series in England in early November, when they will play three internationals against Liz Broomhead's hosts. The South Africans, hosts to England in the summer, were originally mooted to tour in the autumn but New Zealand - ranked third behind South Africa and above England - will prove exciting and exacting under-studies guaranteed to attract television and pack arenas.

Fiona Murray, the England captain, who also leads Essex Metropolitan, found herself facing her national predecessor, Kendra Slawinski, who captained Bedfordshire. Slawinski's team prevailed 41-38, leaving Bedfordshire topping a table dominated by Essex Met in recent seasons. The final round of Inter-Counties League matches, on April 12, will decide if they can stay there.

EXCLUSIVE TIMES NEWSPAPERS GRAND PRIX COMPETITION

£40,000 TO BE WON

PLAY FANTASY FORMULA ONE TODAY



The race for our £40,000 Fantasy Formula One prizes went live yesterday with the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne. The top prize of £25,000, in association with the Marlboro World Championship Team, will go to the manager of the team which heads our leaderboard after the final race of the season, the European Grand Prix at Estoril, Portugal, on October 26. Full results of the race will appear on Friday.

For your chance to win a share of our £40,000 prize fund all you have to do is choose six racing drivers and six constructors from the groups below. If you haven't already registered a team the lines are open until noon on Thursday,

March 27 to enter to play before the Brazilian Grand Prix in Interlagos on March 30 - the first of six races which carry up to 600 bonus points for the team managers who can correctly predict any of the first three drivers to cross the finishing line. You can also enter by fax or post. And, starting today, you can also strengthen your team using our transfer lines which are described below.

Jerry Meredith of Portlaoise, Republic of Ireland, wins our pre-season £1,000 draw. Mrs C Austin, Sunbury, Middlesex and G Smith of West Lothian, each win a Sony PlayStation and Porsche Challenge and Formula One CD-Rom games.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



THE SCORING SYSTEM

DRIVERS For each lap completed: 1 point. Finishing position: 1st 60 points; 2nd 50; 3rd 40; 4th 30; 5th 25; 6th 20; 7th 17; 8th 15; 9th 14; 10th 13; 11th 12; 12th 11; 13th 10; 14th 9; 15th 8; 16th 7; 17th 6; 18th 5; 19th 4; 20th 3. Qualifying position: Pole 30 points; 2nd 25; 3rd 20; 4th 17; 5th 15; 6th 14; 7th 13; 8th 12; 9th 11; 10th 10; 11th 9; 12th 8; 13th 7; 14th 6; 15th 5; 16th 4; 17th 3; 18th 2; 19th 1; 20th 0. Improvement from starting grid to finishing position: 3 points per place improved. Fastest lap: 10 points. Penalty points: Any incident resulting in a driver being made to start from the back of the grid or pit lane -10 points. Any incident resulting in elimination during a race -10 points. Not starting after qualifying for a race -10 points. Speeding in pit lane -5 points. Black flag -20 points.

CONSTRUCTORS Finishing position (first car only): 1st 30 points; 2nd 25; 3rd 20; 4th 17; 5th 15; 6th 14; 7th 13; 8th 12; 9th 11; 10th 10; 11th 9; 12th 8; 13th 7; 14th 6; 15th 5; 16th 4; 17th 3; 18th 2; 19th 1; 20th 0. Penalty points: Any incident resulting in a car being made to start from the back of the grid or pit lane -10 points. Any incident resulting in elimination during a race -10 points. Not starting after qualifying for a race -10 points. Speeding in pit lane -5 points.

BONUS POINTS - only applies to Brazilian, Monaco, British, Belgian, Luxembourg and European Grand Prix. Correctly predicting winning driver: 100 points; second place: 200 points; third place: 300 points.

MAKE THREE SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPS BELOW

DRIVERS				CONSTRUCTORS			
GROUP A		GROUP B		GROUP C		GROUP D	
01 Damon Hill	07 Mika Hakkinen	13 Olivier Panis	19 Giancarlo Fisichella	25 Williams	31 Arrows		
02 Michael Schumacher	08 David Coulthard	14 Jos Verstappen	20 Shinji Nakano	26 Ferrari	32 Sauber		
03 Jacques Villeneuve	09 Rubens Barrichello	15 Ukyo Katayama	21 Nicola Larini	27 McLaren	33 Tyrrell		
04 Eddie Irvine	10 Heinz-Harald Frentzen	16 Pedro Diniz	22 Jarno Trulli	28 Benetton	34 Minardi		
05 Jean Alesi	11 Johnny Herbert	17 Ricardo Rosset	23 Jan Magnussen	29 Jordan	35 Stewart		
06 Gerhard Berger	12 Mika Salo	18 Ralf Schumacher	24 Vincenzo Sospiri	30 Ligier	36 Lola		

FANTASY FORMULA ONE 24-HOUR ENTRY LINE: 0891 405 001

+44 990 100 311 outside the UK

0891 calls cost 50p per minute (standard tariffs apply to +44 990 calls). For inquiries call 01582 702 720, Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm

THE PRIZES

JACKPOT The team manager heading our Fantasy Formula One leaderboard after the European Grand Prix at Estoril, Portugal, on October 26, will win £25,000. Prizes of £10,000 and £5,000 will go to two runners-up.

INDIVIDUAL RACE WINNERS The manager of the team which scores the most points in the Brazilian Grand Prix will win a trip for two to British Grand Prix on July 13. The runner-up will get a Sony PlayStation with a Formula One and Porsche Challenge game worth £250.

For details of a wide range of Formula One trips with BAC Sport, including three special Monaco tours, call 0171-456 7100.

TRANSFERS

If you've already entered a team you can change up to four selections before the Brazilian GP by calling 0891 405 001 (+44 990 100 311 outside the UK) before noon on Thursday March 27. Your new team must comprise three selections from each of groups A, B, C and D. The three selections you make will be deemed to be your prediction for the Brazilian GP bonus points.

TO ENTER BY PHONE

Call our entry hotline on 0891 405 001 (+44 990 100 311 outside the UK). Calls last approximately seven minutes and must be made using a Touch-Tone telephone (most telephones with * and # keys are Touch-Tone).

Follow the instructions on the entry line and tap in your 12 two-digit selections in turn. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply. You will then be asked to give your Fantasy Formula One team name, together with your own name, address, postcode and daytime telephone number (please note, you need to speak these details). You will receive a 10-digit PIN number as confirmation of your entry. Please keep a record of this with your team details.

You can enter a team at any time until noon on Thursday, March 27, to qualify for the start of the Brazilian Grand Prix.

TO ENTER BY POST/FAX

Complete the form, right, with your 12 two-digit selections. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply.

Give your Fantasy Formula One team name, together with your own name, address, postcode and daytime telephone number. Enclose a sterling cheque for £2.50 or provide your credit-card details and post it to: The Times Fantasy Formula One, Abacus House, Dudley St, Luton LU1 1ZZ. You will receive a 10-digit PIN number as confirmation of your entry. Please keep a record of this with your team details.

Entries can be made by faxing the form with your credit-card details to 01582 452106 (+44 1582 452106 outside the UK).

To qualify for the start of the Brazilian Grand Prix, postal entries must be received by first post and faxed entries by noon on Tuesday, March 25, 1997. Entries received after this date will be entered for the remaining grands prix.


THE TIMES FANTASY FORMULA ONE ENTRY FORM

Complete this form with your credit-card details, or enclose a sterling cheque for £2.50 payable to Fantasy Formula One, and post it to: The Times Fantasy Formula One, Abacus House, Dudley Street, Luton LU1 1ZZ. Or fax it on 01582 452106 (+44 1582 452106 outside the UK). The closing date for receipt of this form to qualify for the Brazilian Grand Prix is first post Tuesday, March 25, 1997, and noon on that day for faxed entries.

GROUPS A AND B DRIVERS			Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms	Initials
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GROUP C AND D CONSTRUCTORS			Postcode	Daytime Tel
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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Expiry date	Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/>
Team Name			Name on card	
Signature			Supply address of registered cardholder on a separate sheet of paper if different from that above	
Date			Signature	TC

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Bromsgrove
revel in
victory after
long wait
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Ellis steers her way
to fifth Head title

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CHANGING

Bromsgrove revel in victory after long wait

By JOHN GOODBODY



IN SCHOOLS

OF ALL the girls' national championships, perhaps only netball generates greater enthusiasm among schools than hockey. With the sport enjoying a regular place on the Olympic programme and the Great Britain women just missing the bronze medal in a penalty shoot-out in Atlanta, hockey has a status that many other activities envy.

The finals of British Aerospace championships, which took place at Milton Keynes last week, were the climax of a national tournament that this winter attracted 1,800 schools and brought ultimate victories for Bromsgrove School, Worcester, in the under-18s and Gordano, Bristol, in the under-16s competitions.

Watching with dispassionate interest was Maggie Souvay, the director of player performance with the All-England Women's Hockey Association. She said: "If you compare our junior level with other countries at the highest level, I think we have a good understanding and knowledge of the game but we can improve our personal fitness and skill levels."

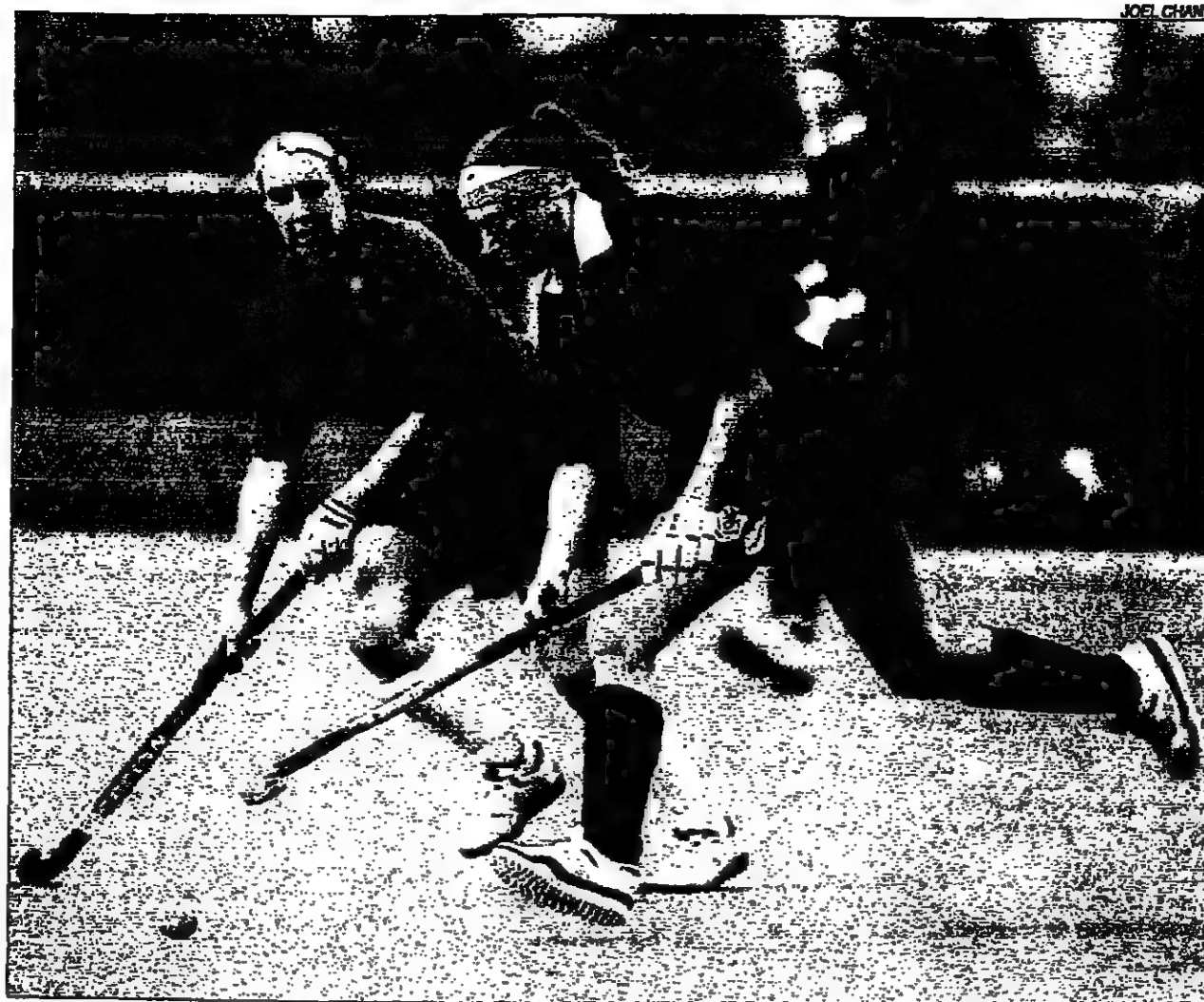
"Often we need to put 'pace on the hit. We simply don't hit the ball hard enough. Often we need to control and pass, rather than control, dribble

and pass. That said, we still want to keep the individual creative side of the game."

One girl who impressed with her goalkeeping in the finals was Fiona Gibson, from Bromsgrove, an England under-18 international. Her six goals led her school, the Midlands champions, to four consecutive victories against the other regional winners.

Caroline Ralph, the head of girls' PE at Bromsgrove, said: "She wants to score goals. Whereas others might step back in the circle, she wants to be in there."

Their decisive victory came against Cheltenham Ladies College, where Ralph had taught for the previous six years. "Although my loyalties were slightly divided, I felt physically sick beforehand with nerves," she said. "We put pressure on them at every possible opportunity and



Martine Gunter, right, of Gordano, the under-16 winners, in full stride in her team's 4-0 triumph over Queenswood

Cheltenham started making mistakes. To win 3-0 was a fantastic result."

It was Bromsgrove's first victory in the 17 years of the tournament and the team, containing three other internationals, Lucilla Wright, her sister, Sally, and Liz Fox, only conceded one goal in the finals.

The under-16 competition was tighter. Gordano totalled ten points. They finished one point clear of Queenswood, of Hertfordshire, whose squad contained several of the team

that finished second in the Aberdare tennis cup last summer and third in the national skiing championships.

Pete Arwell, coach of the England under-18 side, has built up an impressive reputation at Gordano, taking the senior schools' title two years ago. The outstanding players represent the local Portishead club every Saturday to gain extra experience.

He said: "We are trying to develop players with athleticism. Hockey is now a fast game and it is getting faster. It

is not just speed of movement, it is speed of thought. We try to stretch play out and exploit the spaces behind the opposing players."

This was what they did in the game against Queenswood, who had been more impressive in the two morning matches. Gordano outplayed Queenswood, winning 4-0, and, with both schools victorious in their final matches, took the title by the single point.

Dame Alice Harpur, of Bedford, may have finished last, with two points, but in Lucy

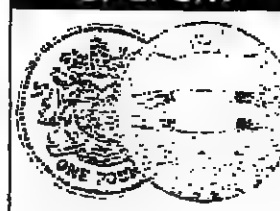
Penfound, 12, they possessed the youngest player to have been selected for the England under-16 team to play in the Home Counties tournament this month.

Angie Grafton, the head of PE, said: "When Lucy started playing three years ago you could see she was going to be so good just by the way she walked and took hold of the stick."

"Her stick-work skills are very good and, in shooting, she can undercut the ball. She is a girl to watch."

Lawyers spot a lucrative field of play

THE BUSINESS OF SPORT



SOME weeks it seems that sport stars are busier fighting in the courtroom than on the pitch. The score-draw result in the Grobbelaar bribery case, which concluded last week, left everyone dissatisfied except the lawyers, who will have the chance to claim further appearance fees at a retrial. Elsewhere, Welsh rugby union found itself in the dock over its disciplinary procedure, while yet another footballer, Crystal Palace's Darren Pitcher, is preparing to take an opponent to court to win damages over a career-threatening injury.

Sport used to be able to muddle through these kind of problems without recourse to courts. Most governing bodies took an amateur approach to business affairs and were happier dealing with problems using committees composed of the great and the good. But with the increasing sums of money scattered throughout the sporting world, gentlemen's agreements and verbal contracts no longer guarantee agreement.

Inevitably, there are a growing number of lawyers who have spotted a growing market and begun to hone their sports skills. There are even two academic departments — at Manchester Metropolitan and Anglia Polytechnic universities — dedicated to exploring the issues surrounding sport and the law.

Sport is finding dealing with the courts especially tough because there is no such thing as a specialist "sports law" to resolve disputes. There is not even an agreed definition of what constitutes a sport — leaving court battles to be fought with legal principles devised for rather different industries. The Bosman case, for example, showed that European football had been employing restrictions "for years that were not tenable."

In another recent case that sent shock waves through sport, the judge in the trial of Mark Jones — the Swansea rugby player who took the Welsh Rugby Union to court over a suspension for fighting — described sport authorities as "naïve" to believe that disciplinary decisions could not be challenged. Overturning the ban, while an appeal is being prepared, the judge warned that sanctions, such as suspensions, have economic consequences that could bring authorities into conflict with the courts. One of the complaints of Jones, who was at risk of losing win bonuses of up to £10,000 while suspended, was that he was allowed no

legal representation at the hearing.

Sports and legal bodies are slowly beginning to respond to the challenge posed by the increasing use of the courts to settle disputes. The Law Commission has offered some guidelines on one of the most contentious issues — legal claims for injuries suffered during sport. The commission has argued that no person should be held guilty of an offence if an injury occurs in the course of playing or practising a recognised sport in accordance with the rules.

But this definition still leaves the door ajar for claims based on arguments that the injury was suffered because of illegal play. The floodgates appear to be opening with Darren Pitcher becoming the latest footballer to take to the courts, suing Paul Reid, of

Luddersfield, for £500,000 over a tackle that has virtually ended his career. Italian authorities have meanwhile taken injury claims to their logical extreme, charging Frank Williams — the head of the

motor racing team — with manslaughter in Italy after the death of Ayrton Senna.

But it is not just at the professional end of the game that lawyers are finding regular employment. Ben Smoldon — a former schoolboy rugby player who was paralysed after a scrum collapsed — last year won a negligence claim against the referee. The case raised the spectre of referees — and especially volunteers who do not have the legal support of a referee's association — becoming responsible for huge damages claims.

With sports authorities, referees and players all in the firing line of the law, sport faces a nightmare scenario where legal intervention could cause total chaos — as nearly happened this year with the five nations' championship. Sports authorities must work hard to make their sports legally watertight — perhaps following the lead of the Atlanta Olympics and devise contracts to ensure that internal disciplinary procedures are legally binding.

ALASDAIR MURRAY

ROWING

Ellis steers her way to fifth Head title

"IF WE don't cross the line first, we haven't won the Head," Richard Phelps, the Thames RC coach, said before the Women's Eights Head on Saturday (Mike Rosewell writes). The self-evident comment for most sports, had special significance for his crew, with five athletes from the Olympic Games in Atlanta on board, who were starting fourth with three fast crews ahead of them.

Thames, stroked by Ali Gill, a veteran of three Olympics, and controlled by Suzie Ellis, Great Britain's Olympic cox, duly conformed. Ellis steered her crew past Tideway Scullers at Barnes and overhauled Cambridge's Boat Race crew along Chiswick Eyer, before sweeping past London University's crew of international aspirants in the last mile. Thames then waited anx-

Photograph, page 34

iously to see two fancied late starters, a crew of Holland internationals from Utrecht, and a crew of other British hopefuls from Marlow, but they posed no threat to Thames's superiority, which produced a 16-second winning cushion over Marlow. The result was consolation for Ellis, who, since Atlanta, has failed to gain selection with Cambridge's men, but was given a day off from her reserve crew duties to achieve her fifth Head title.

The large time differences between the established international teams in the Thames and Marlow crews and the rest of the pack was perhaps worrying, but there is clearly student talent at London, Cambridge and Imperial College, who rose from 161st to seventh.

SAILING

Leaders find storm shelter as Challenge fleet goes west

By EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

A WEEK into the fourth leg of the BT Global Challenge, which takes the 14-strong fleet from Sydney to Cape Town, the crews are experiencing typically unpleasant, cold and windy conditions as they track westwards towards the Kerguelen Islands with Tasmania now well astern.

With the finish still 5,000 miles to the northwest, the boats are tightly bunched. Only about 100 miles separate the joint leaders, *Global Teamwork* and *Save The Children*, from the back marker, *Time & Tide*.

In the past few days, however, the key has been the decision by the leading skippers, Mervyn Owen and Andy Hindley, to head south as quickly as possible to an area of stronger and steadier winds. At the end of last week, several yachts to the north of the pack found the wind abating, allowing *Teamwork* to the south, to move from twelfth position into the lead.

So far, the leg has produced spectacular thunderstorms and at least one dose of severe weather in which winds gusted to more than 70 knots, although there have been no reported injuries or damage. Yesterday the fleet was beating under much-reduced sail against 25-30 knot westerlies.

Group 4, the overall race leader, is in fourth position for this leg and Mike Golding's crew have found the going tough. "It's going to be a long, hard slog to Cape Town," they reported. "We

seem to be making such slow progress and, with a series of fronts on their way giving westerly winds, it doesn't look like there's much better to come. It seems at the moment that any small gain is followed by a small loss."

In the Vendée Globe non-stop single-handed round-the-world race, Pete Goss, of Great Britain, has picked up the northeast trade winds after crossing the doldrum belt. Goss is reaching on a direct course for the finish in steady easterlies, which are pushing *Aqua Quorum* along at an average of nine knots.

"*Aqua Quorum* is in good condition," Goss reported yesterday. "My generator is working well, but I still have to pump water for the cooling system. Apart from that, which takes three to four hours a day, I can concentrate on sailing the boat. I even have time to read a little."

During the past week, Goss has caught and overtaken the only other competitor still racing, the Frenchwoman, Catherine Chabaud, on the 60ft *Whirlpool Europe 2*.

Yesterday Goss was about 70 miles ahead of her with an estimated finish date at Les Sables d'Olonne of March 22. The Briton looks likely to finish fifth overall, even after his 13-day compensation for the rescue of Raphael Dinelli is taken into account.

GLOBAL CHALLENGE

LATEST POSITIONS

Fourth leg: Sydney to Cape Town, 5,000 miles

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POSITIONS (with miles to Cape Town) as at 13.50 GMT yesterday: 1. *Save The Children* 4,999 2. *Global Teamwork* 5,001 3. *Time & Tide* 5,002 4. *Teamwork* 5,003 5. *Save The Children* 5,004 6. *Global Teamwork* 5,005 7. *Time & Tide* 5,006 8. *Teamwork* 5,007 9. *Save The Children* 5,008 10. *Global Teamwork* 5,009 11. *Time & Tide* 5,010 12. *Teamwork* 5,011 13. *Save The Children* 5,012 14. *Time & Tide* 5,013 15. *Teamwork* 5,014

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Whether words bear defamatory meaning

Mapp v News Group Newspapers Ltd
Gillan v Same
Goscomb v Same
Watton v Same

Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Hutchison
[Judgment February 27]

A judge asked to rule whether words complained of in an action for defamation were capable of bearing a particular meaning or meanings attributed to them in the pleadings. The judge was asked to rule whether the words complained of were capable of bearing the meaning or meanings attributed to them in the pleadings, he may dismiss the claim or make such other order or give such judgment in the proceedings as may be just.

Mr James Price, QC, for the defendants; Mr Thomas Shields, QC, for the plaintiffs.

LORD JUSTICE HIRST said that in actions for defamation, where questions as to the meaning of the words complained of were in issue, as they nearly always were, the functions of the judge and the jury had always been different. It was for the judge to rule, when asked to do so, whether the words were capable of bearing a particular meaning or meanings alleged in the statement of claim, in other words to lay down the limits of the range of possible defamatory meanings of which the words were capable. It was for the jury to determine the actual meaning of the words within that permissible range.

Traditionally, any such ruling had been sought and given at the trial itself, unless tried as a preliminary issue, and any earlier interlocutory proceedings were confined to summons to arise out under Order 18, rule 19, which applied only in plain and obvious cases.

Order 82, rule 3A provides: "(1) At any time after service of the statement of claim either party may apply to a judge in chambers for an order determining whether or not the words complained of are capable of bearing a particular meaning or meanings attributed to them in the pleadings."

"(2) If it appears to the judge on the hearing of an application under paragraph (1) that none of the words complained of are capable of bearing the meaning or meanings attributed to them in the pleadings, he may dismiss the claim or make such other order or give such judgment in the proceedings as may be just."

Mr Price had suggested that was too high a test, and harled back to the Order 18, rule 19 procedure. In his Lordship's judgment the proper role for the judge when adjudicating a question under Order 82, rule 3A was to evaluate the words complained of and to delimit the range of meanings of which the words were reasonably capable, exercising his own judgment in the light of the principles laid down in *Slim v Daily Telegraph* [1968] 2 QB 157, [1968] AC 234, 257; *Jones v Shilton* [1968] 1 WLR 1306; and *Morgan v Odhams Press Ltd* [1971] 1 WLR 1239, 1251 and without any Order 18, rule 19 overtones.

It would, as was common ground, still be open to the plaintiff at the trial to rely on any lesser defamatory meanings within the permissible range, but not on any meanings outside it.

The whole purpose of the new rule was to enable the court to fix in advance the ground rules on permissible meanings, which were of such cardinal importance in defamation actions, not only for the purpose of assessing the degree of injury to the plaintiff's reputation, but also for the purpose of evaluating any defences raised, in particular justification and fair comment.

That applied with particular force in such cases as the instant where there was a defence of justification of a lesser meaning than that pleaded in the statement of claim.

The plaintiffs who were police officers complained of an article in the newspaper on February 2, 1992 which said: "Drug quiz cop kills himself - Police Sergeant Gerry Carroll killed himself after being ordered to provide information about colleagues accused of peddling drugs. Sgt Carroll, 46, shot himself through the head in a cell. He was custody officer with the drugs squad in Stoke Newington, North London, when eight fellow officers were alleged to have been involved in drug dealing and bribery. The accused officers have been transferred to other police stations while an investigation is carried out."

The pleaded defamatory meaning at issue in the instant proceedings was: "The said words in their natural and ordinary meaning meant and were understood to mean that the plaintiff was guilty of involvement in drug dealing and bribery, that he was a police officer, and that he had been involved in a police station in London, when eight fellow officers were alleged to have been involved in drug dealing and bribery."

Consequently in his Lordship's judgment the words were incapable of imputing actual guilt to any of the eight officers and the appeal would be allowed.

LORD JUSTICE MILLETT and **LORD JUSTICE HUTCHISON** agreed. Solicitors: Farrer & Co; Russell Jones & Walker.

MR JUSTICE LLOYD, sitting in the Chancery Division, held, dismissing an action by Harvey and Valentina Michaels, seeking information as to qualifying tenants on the disposal of the freehold of Harley House, Marylebone Road, London, by Taylor Woodrow Property Co Ltd.

Section 736 of the Companies Act 1985 provides: "(1) A company is a 'subsidiary' of another company, its 'holding company', if that other company— (a) holds a majority of the voting rights in it, or (b) is a member of it and has the right to appoint or remove a majority of its board of directors... or if it is a subsidiary of a company which is itself a subsidiary of that other company."

Section 736A provides: "(1) Rights held by a person in a fiduciary capacity shall be treated as not held by him."

MR JOHN MOWBRAY, QC and **MR EDWARD COUSINS** for the plaintiffs; **MR KIM LEVISON**, QC and **MR ANTHONY TANEY** for the defendant.

MR JUSTICE LLOYD said that the landlords, Taylor Woodrow Property Company Ltd ("TWP") found a purchaser for the freehold of the building early in 1993. At about the same time the recently formed residents' association expressed an interest in acquiring the freehold. The landlords accordingly adopted a method intended to effect a commercial sale of the building without giving rise to statutory rights of pre-emption in favour of the qualifying tenants.

The landlord had sold the building to its subsidiary, Taylor Woodrow Development Ltd ("TWD") for £1,000,000 late in 1992, but retained the bare title to the property itself.

Power to resolve costs dispute

Electricity Supply Nominees Ltd v Farrell and Others

Before Lord Justice Kennedy, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Mr Justice Buckley
[Judgment February 3]

Following a consent order a High Court judge retained jurisdiction to resolve a dispute in relation to interest on costs.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing the appeal of *Electricity Supply Nominees Ltd* from the decision on February 2, 1996 of Judge Bowsher, QC, sitting on official referee's business, whereby the plaintiff's application for liberty to enter judgment for interest on owed costs was refused.

Following a settlement, a consent order was made by the court staying the plaintiff's proceedings against the defendants under Order 22, rule 4 of the Rules of the Supreme Court and enabling the plaintiff to withdraw the defendants' payments into court.

The plaintiff's solicitors were dilatory in lodging their bill of costs and the defendants refused to pay interest on the costs for the whole period from the date of the consent order.

Only some of the sums on the taxing master's certificate were paid and the plaintiff sought an order, inter alia, that the stay of proceedings be removed so that enforcement proceedings could be commenced as the defendants were in breach of the consent order.

The order was refused on the ground that once money paid into court had been accepted, or leave to take the money out had been given, the court ceased to have jurisdiction in the matter and all costs matters were handed over to the taxing master.

MR JEREMY MORGAN for the plaintiff; **MR ROGER STEWART** for the second, third and fourth defendants; the first defendant took no part in the appeal.

LORD JUSTICE KENNEDY said that the defendants contended that once the consent order was made the High Court had discharged its function save for the limited functions delegated to the taxing master; those functions were not wide enough to enable a taxing master to resolve disputes as to recovery of interest on costs and the only remedy was to commence fresh proceedings.

The plaintiff submitted that the court retained jurisdiction, once a consent order had been made, to make the order it sought and that it would be unnecessary and inappropriate to commence a fresh action.

It was accepted that in practice ever since 1838 courts at all levels had on many occasions exercised the jurisdiction for which the plaintiff contended; his Lordship referred to *In re London Wharfing and Warehousing Co* (1885) 4 LJ Ch 1157 and *Boswell v Coats* (1887) 57 LJ Ch 101.

Although the defendants strove valiantly to meet the weight of authority, in his Lordship's judgment they had failed to do so.

The arguments of the plaintiff were of such strength that the issue should be resolved in its favour with the result that the judge did have jurisdiction to resolve the issues.

Having considered the case of *Hunt v R. M. Douglas (Roofings) Ltd* [1990] 1 AC 948, on a true construction of the relevant consent order interest on costs under the Judgments Act 1838 ran from the date of the consent order and not from the date of the taxing master's certificate.

The covenant was intended to apply to natural individuals and not to companies.

The next aspect of the case was to look at ex gratia payments, which were made in accordance with the secretary of state's written answer to a House of Commons question of November 29, 1985.

It was abundantly clear that those who were not intended to be covered by such payments related to people who had been in custody.

Solicitors: Liddell Zurbrugg; Treasury Solicitor.

No compensation for company

Regina v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Atlantic Commercial (UK) Ltd

Before Mr Justice Popplewell
[Judgment February 25]

Compensation for a miscarriage of justice was only payable to a natural person and could not be paid to a company.

MR JUSTICE POPPLEWELL so held in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing the application of Atlantic Commercial (UK) Ltd for judicial review by way of certiorari to quash the decision of the Secretary of State for the Home Department to refuse ex gratia compensation as well as compensation under section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 and by way of mandamus to require the secretary of state to pay the compensation.

Section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 provides: "(1) ... when a person has been convicted of a criminal offence and subsequently his conviction has been reversed ... the secretary of state shall pay compensation for the miscarriage of justice to the person who has suffered punishment as a result of such conviction."

The applicant had been charged with being knowingly concerned in the exportation of prohibited goods contrary to section 68 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 but on July 19, 1994 the Court of Appeal quashed the conviction because of abuse of process by the prosecuting authority.

MR PETER IRVIN for the applicant; **MR NIGEL PLENNING**, QC, for the secretary of state.

MR JUSTICE POPPLEWELL said that simply reading section 133 seemed to his Lordship that it was entirely inappropriate to cover the position of a company.

From the wording of section 133 itself his Lordship was of the view that the contrary was the intention and it did appear that section 133 was not intended to cover a company.

The matter did not rest there. His Lordship was entitled to look at article 14.6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2127(XXII)) which it was quite clear was the forerunner of the legislation.

The covenant was intended to apply to natural individuals and not to companies.

The next aspect of the case was to look at ex gratia payments, which were made in accordance with the secretary of state's written answer to a House of Commons question of November 29, 1985.

It was abundantly clear that those who were not intended to be covered by such payments related to people who had been in custody.

Solicitors: Liddell Zurbrugg; Treasury Solicitor.

Tenants' rights avoided in transfer of building

Michaels and Another v Harley House (Marylebone) Ltd
Before Mr Justice Lloyd
[Judgment March 3]

The commercial sale of a block of flats did not give rise to statutory rights of pre-emption in favour of qualifying tenants under Part I of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 because the building was transferred by the landlord to an associated company within section 736A(5) of the Companies Act 1985, as amended by the Companies Act 1990, and therefore the transfer was not a "relevant disposal" under section 4 of the 1987 Act.

MR JUSTICE LLOYD, sitting in the Chancery Division, so held, dismissing an action by Harvey and Valentina Michaels, seeking information as to qualifying tenants on the disposal of the freehold of Harley House, Marylebone Road, London, by Taylor Woodrow Property Co Ltd.

Section 736 of the Companies Act 1985 provides: "(1) A company is a 'subsidiary' of another company, its 'holding company', if that other company— (a) holds a majority of the voting rights in it, or (b) is a member of it and has the right to appoint or remove a majority of its board of directors... or if it is a subsidiary of a company which is itself a subsidiary of that other company."

Section 736A provides: "(1) Rights held by a person in a fiduciary capacity shall be treated as not held by him."

MR JOHN MOWBRAY, QC and **MR EDWARD COUSINS** for the plaintiffs; **MR KIM LEVISON**, QC and **MR ANTHONY TANEY** for the defendant.

MR JUSTICE LLOYD said that the landlords, Taylor Woodrow Property Company Ltd ("TWP") found a purchaser for the freehold of the building early in 1993. At about the same time the recently formed residents' association expressed an interest in acquiring the freehold. The landlords accordingly adopted a method intended to effect a commercial sale of the building without giving rise to statutory rights of pre-emption in favour of the qualifying tenants.

The landlord had sold the building to its subsidiary, Taylor Woodrow Development Ltd ("TWD") for £1,000,000 late in 1992, but retained the bare title to the property itself.

The scheme involved the setting up of the defendant company as a subsidiary of TWD. By a property sale agreement TWD agreed to sell the building to the defendant for £15,750,000. To finance the sale TWD agreed to advance to the defendant £15,750,000 on the terms of loan notes.

TWD also entered into a property sale agreement with the purchaser to sell the two flat issued shares in the defendant and the loan notes, conditionally on completion of the property sale agreement. The purchaser also had the benefit of a placing agreement.

Over £10,000,000 of the consideration was satisfied by new placing shares, which were listed on the Stock Exchange as a condition precedent to that agreement.

Completion of both the share sale agreement and property sale agreement took place on March 25. By mistake the property transfer was dated March 24, whereas the share transfer was correctly dated March 25.

The tenants were informed of the sale by TWP and the defendant. The residents' association sought information under section 11 of the 1987 Act, some of which was supplied although the defendant denied their entitlement to it. The tenants nevertheless failed to serve a notice within three months as required by section 12. The plaintiffs did not begin proceedings until 1996.

The disposal of a registered estate within Part I of the 1987 Act took place on the execution of the transfer in unconditional form, not on the date of registration: see *Maintaining v Trustees of Henry Smith's Charity* [The Times February 20, 1996] 3 WLR 1033.

The transfer of the freehold to the defendant was accepted as a relevant disposal unless it was accepted by section 42(1) of the 1987 Act as a disposal to an associated company. What had to be looked at was the moment of execution.

The parties clearly intended the property transfer to become unconditional prior to the share transfer. The evidence established that shares were not transferred until after the transfer of the building had been executed unconditionally.

At the time the building was transferred to the defendant, it was an associated company of TWP, therefore the transfer was not a relevant disposal. It followed that the action failed.

Solicitors: Merriman White & Co; Titmus Salner Deschart.

Access rights warning

S v H (Abduction: Access rights)

Before Mrs Justice Hale
[Judgment February 20]

The courts should be reluctant to allow rights of access to a child to return to the custody of a parent when hearing cases concerning children.

MRS JUSTICE HALE so held in the Family Division in a reserved judgment handed down in chambers and reported with leave, when refusing to order the summary return of a child under articles 3 and 12 of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980, set out in Schedule 1 to the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985, because the plaintiff father had failed to show that he had rights of custody under either Italian law or under the Convention.

MR HENRY SERRIGHT for the father; **MR RICHARD SCARFAN** for the mother.

MRS JUSTICE HALE said that the mother, a United Kingdom national, who was not married to the Italian father, had lived in Italy since 1974 and their child was born there in 1980. In 1990 the Italian courts awarded the mother custody, with access to the father.

Mother and child came to England in 1996. The father began proceedings for the return of the child to Italy and the question arose as to what rights he had under Italian law and whether those rights amounted to rights of custody under the Hague Convention of 1980.

There was conflicting evidence on the effect of article 317 of the Italian Civil Code, however on the facts, the father had not proved that he had anything other than a right to watch over the child's education and living conditions, together with a right to access twice a week and in the holidays.

Clearly those rights were only compatible with close proximity of father and son but they did not amount to rights of custody under Italian law. However, even if the removal was not prohibited in Italian law, it could still be wrongful under the Convention.

Recent Court of Appeal decisions, see *In re B (A Minor) (Abduction)* [1994] 2 FLR 249 and *C v C (Abduction: Rights of custody)* [1999] 1 WLR 654, appeared to support the contention that the paramount importance of the child's interests could change one type of right into another; and that the English courts should be strenuous in their efforts to construe the Convention broadly and in accordance with its purpose: see *In re F (A Minor) (Abduction: Custody rights abroad)* [1995] Fam 234, 236.

However, given the clear distinction drawn in the Convention between rights of custody and rights of access, on the facts, this case fell on the other side of the line and accordingly it was not possible to conclude that there had been wrongful removal in breach of the rights of custody.

Solicitors: Hornby Adcroft & Levy; Harrington & Carmichael, Adelaide.

THE TIMES

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THE TIMES

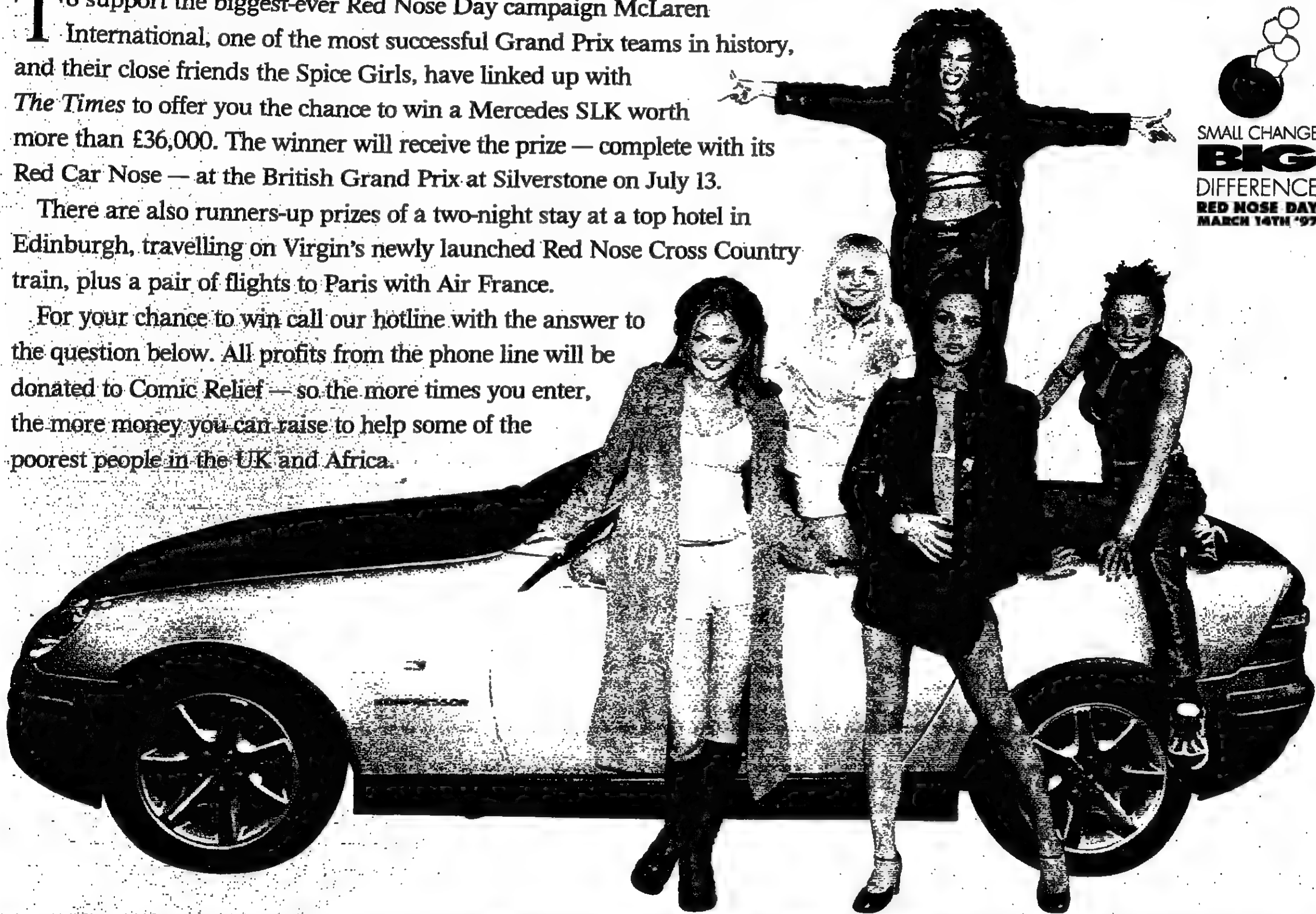
Win a £36,000 Mercedes SLK

and help raise money for Comic Relief

To support the biggest-ever Red Nose Day campaign McLaren International, one of the most successful Grand Prix teams in history, and their close friends the Spice Girls, have linked up with *The Times* to offer you the chance to win a Mercedes SLK worth more than £36,000. The winner will receive the prize — complete with its Red Car Nose — at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone on July 13.

There are also runners-up prizes of a two-night stay at a top hotel in Edinburgh, travelling on Virgin's newly launched Red Nose Cross Country train, plus a pair of flights to Paris with Air France.

For your chance to win call our hotline with the answer to the question below. All profits from the phone line will be donated to Comic Relief — so the more times you enter, the more money you can raise to help some of the poorest people in the UK and Africa.



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0891 calls cost 50p per minute

In a unique event earlier this year, McLaren presented their new Formula One team, West McLaren Mercedes, at a glittering event in front of



5,000 guests which featured a spectacular appearance of the Spice Girls. Both McLaren and the girls are strong supporters of Comic Relief. The Spice Girls are donating the royalties of their latest release *Who Do You Think You Are?* to this year's campaign and will be performing live on BBC1 this Friday with the alternative Spice Girls.



including Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders as the *Sugar Lumps*.

McLaren have, this year, created a new partnership with West and Mercedes-Benz for the 1997 Formula 1 World Championship. Strong on technical achievements through commitment to research and advanced engineering, McLaren already have 104 Grands Prix wins to their name and are set for greater achievements this year.

HOW TO ENTER

Call our hotline, above, before midnight Saturday March 22 with the answer to this question:

How much money has Comic Relief raised in its five previous Red Nose Days?

a) 100 million b) 112 million c) 150 million

All proceeds from the line will go to Comic Relief. Normal TNL competition rules apply.

COMIC RELIEF — THE FACTS

Red Nose Day is Friday, March 14. Over five Red Nose Days, Comic Relief has raised more than £112 million. Two-thirds of the money goes to self-sufficiency projects in Africa, and one-third goes to projects in the UK which support older people and young people who are homeless, disabled or who have drug and alcohol problems.

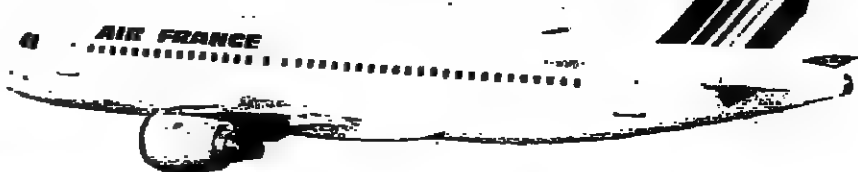
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Buy a red nose for your car at any Texaco service station, or one for your face or to wear as a badge. Do something and get sponsored. Donate money by calling: 0345 460 460. Watch the BBC1 extravaganza hosted by Lenny Henry on Friday at 7pm.

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CHANGING TIMES

COMPANIES

MICHAEL CLARK

UB needs more than a crumb of comfort

UNITED BISCUITS: Eric Nicoli, no longer the bright, young, new broom, has had six years to sort out the problems of Britain's biscuits and snacks champion. The City, hitherto patient, will be looking for full-year figures that show a significantly improved performance on Thursday from the group that owns the Phileas Fogg brand, and McVitie and KP, after a period of restructuring.

NatWest Securities forecasts that pre-tax profits will rebound from £23 million to £109 million, while earnings per share jump from less than 1p to 14.4p. Profits are expected to be up in the group's domestic operations, such as snacks, Ross Young's and biscuits, with the benefit of lower raw material costs filtering through. But investors will want to know that marketing has not been sacrificed to bolster short-term profits.

The results will be tarnished by further exceptional losses in excess of £100 million. Disposal of Ross Vegetables for £44 million, announced in December, will dilute earnings, and the snacks division will again be held back by the price war with PepsiCo's Walkers.

ZENECA: After January's comprehensive trading update, tomorrow's full-year figures are likely to contain few surprises. Last week's warning from the US Food and Drug Administration about production standards should not ruffle any feathers. UBS, the broker, is looking for a further healthy increase in earnings. Pre-tax profits are expected to be up about 14 per cent to top £1 billion, with earnings 13 per cent better at 70.3p per share. A similar increase in the payout is

also envisaged at 35p. The speciality end of the group will have benefited from shedding peripheral businesses.

ORANGE: Increased losses should dominate full-year figures tomorrow, although the market is unlikely to be too perturbed. The deficit is expected to grow from £197 million to £239 million, with the loss per share up 21 per cent to 19.9p. Brokers say that Orange is meeting all its targets, with 404,000 new subscribers recorded in the past year. Revenues will have soared from £228 million to £614 million because of the inclusion of French and German service providers and a change of accounting policy on the sale of handsets. Once again there is no dividend.

REED INTERNATIONAL: Brokers will pay close attention to final figures on Wednesday, in the wake of December's profits warning. News is expected on the sale of the remaining consumer books division. Reed will rely heavily on scientific and legal publishing for growth.

Despite recent downgradings, analysts expect pre-tax profits of £579 million, up 7 per cent. Reed has spent about £150 million on acquisitions in the past year and these should be contributing. But a softening in the travel information market will not help. Nor will currency fluctuations. Shareholders should be rewarded with a 10 per cent higher payout of 27p.

RENTOKIL INITIAL: On Wednesday all eyes will again be focused on whether the group has achieved its target 20 per cent



Eric Nicoli is under pressure to produce much-improved figures

earnings growth. Recent indications would suggest that trading in the second half has been tough. Estimates of pre-tax profits range from £315 million to £335 million, compared with £214 million last time. More importantly, brokers still expect another 20 per cent gain in earnings to 17p a share.

The figures will be dented by an exceptional item of £20 million relating to recently acquired BET, with a further £20 million lost through currency fluctuations.

TI GROUP: The City expects a solid full-year performance with pre-tax profits on Wednesday up to as much as £217 million (£182 million). It is too early for a useful contribution from Forsheda, the polymer engineering group, and with automotive struggling, John Crane and Dowty Aerospace made most of the running. Expect earnings up about 19 per cent at 30.7p.

SCHROEDERS: Bringing up the tail of the annual bank reporting

season on Wednesday is one of the City's few remaining independent merchant banks, still nearly half family owned.

Schroders, tipped by NatWest Securities to post a 22 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £240 million, should have benefited from a good second half in investment banking from fees earned on the Northern Electric bids, the Imperial Tobacco float and the merger of Lucas and Vario.

On the asset management side, funds are up about a quarter to more than £92 billion. The net dividend could rise by a respectable 16 per cent to 18.5p a share.

MIRROR GROUP: Higher newsprint and promotional costs will take the gloss off Thursday's full-year figures, with pre-tax profits of about £90 million against £77.1 million last time. Price rises during the first half suggest that newspaper profits will fail to match earlier expectations. Moves into other media areas, such as digital television, are not being warmly received by the City and could affect future growth.

UNITED NEWS & MEDIA: Full-year figures on Friday are likely to be distorted by exceptional items of up to £52 million, relating to losses at Channel 5 and merger provisions. Pre-tax profit estimates range from £280 million to £285 million, against £258.7 million last time. Earnings should be up 8 per cent at 37.6p. A total of £730 million has been spent on acquisitions since United Newspapers and MAI merged. Despite Channel 5 losses, the main businesses are expected to have performed strongly.

RECKITT & COLMAN: A pick-up in sales during the second half should offset what was judged as a dull underlying performance during the first six months. Full-year figures on Thursday should also reflect the benefits of recent restructuring, with pre-tax profits up from £295 million to between £317 million and £319 million. The payout is forecast to rise 8 per cent to 21.8p.

ENTERPRISE OIL: These figures on Thursday should show that the group has shrugged off the ill-effects of its abortive bid for Lasso. A strong oil price will bolster net income by about 54 per cent, to £156.7 million, with earnings per share up a similar amount at 28.6p. The group remains prolific in exploration successes, the latest being the Abbot Field in the central North Sea.

BRITISH VITA: The strong recovery in profits reflected at the interim stage is likely to have continued in the second half. Full-year pre-tax profits today should come in at £54 million, against £47.4 million last time, with earnings up 11 per cent at 15.7p. Margins will have benefited from increased demand in Europe and the lower cost of raw materials. The payout will be up from 7.9p to 8.25p.

BBA GROUP: Operating profits should show a useful increase when the group reports tomorrow, although revenue will be down because of discontinued businesses. Pre-tax profits for the year are likely to come in at £144 million, compared with £118 million last time. There should be scope for a 1p increase in the dividend to 7p.

TODAY

Interim: Ardagh, Cash Converters International, Domestic & General, Kleinfelt Development Fund, Poly-pipe. Final: British Vita, Brunel, C&G, Falcay Group, IRI, Intron, J&J, Lapsort, Persimmon, Persone Group, Premier Oil, Pilon, Rayon Group, Sanderson Bramall Motor, Treats Group, Spirax-Sarco Engineering.

Economic statistics: UK February producer prices, US Treasury auction of short-term T-bills.

TOMORROW

Interim: Murray Ventures, Redrow Group, Finsler BSA Group, BPP Holdings, Church & Co, Cowie Group, Cussons Property Group, Ex-parat International, Hamilton & Crossfield, Independent Insurance Group, Kelson Group, Merchants Trust, Orange, Peak, Portland Group, Ready-mix, Robert Walters, Wallington Holdings, Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television Holdings, Zeneca.

Economic statistics: UK British Retail Consortium February retail sales survey, UK January new construction orders, US (Q4) revised labour productivity.

WEDNESDAY

Interim: Corteca International, Druid Group, Final: Baynes (Charles), Brent International, Church & Co, Forst & Colonial Enterprise, Heywood Williams, Interim, Leslie Wise, Lionheart, Midland Independent Newspapers, Minotaur, Reed International, Rentokil Initial, Schroders, TeleWest, TI Group.

Economic statistics: UK January industrial/manufacturing output.

THURSDAY

Interim: Sider, Final: Costa Vi-yella, Cortworth, Courts Consulting Group, Enterprise Oil, General Cable, Graham Group, Invesco, Jeyes Group, Legal & General, M&A, Mirror Group, Molins, Nelson Hurst, Reckitt & Colman, Tibury Douglas, United Biscuits, Woodchester Investment.

Economic statistics: US weekly jobless claims report, US February retail sales, US (Q4) current account deficit.

FRIDAY

Interim: none scheduled, Final: Anglo Pacific Resources, Briton, Mitras Investment Trust, United News & Media, Vita.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

City takes post-election view

The City is now convinced that there will be no interest rate rises before the election and thoughts have begun to turn to the monetary outlook for the incoming government. Most forecasters believe that rates will need to rise from the middle of the year, but there is increasing optimism that they will not need to rise to the 7 per cent figure that some economists had been predicting.

This more optimistic outlook for rates should be backed up by factory gate

figures, which are published today. MMS International, the economic forecaster, predicts that producer prices output data will show a monthly rise of 0.2 per cent. The annual figure is expected to remain flat at 1.5 per cent.

The industrial production figures, due on Wednesday, are expected to show a monthly rise of 0.7 per cent, against 0.6 per cent last month. But the manufacturing output figures are predicted to remain weak, with output expected to show a slight rise of 0.3 per cent — taking the annual rate to 1.5 per cent. Data

released by the British Retail Consortium tomorrow is expected to show strong, but not unsustainable, high street spending.

In the US, producer price and retail sales figures are also expected to show that the case for rate rises is not proven. The core producer price index, due on Friday, is expected to show a rise of 0.1 per cent. Retail sales data, published on Thursday, is expected to show a modest 0.3 per cent rise.

ALASDAIR MURRAY

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 33

FARFALLA

(c) A candle-fly or moth. From the Italian for a butterfly. "New Farfalla in her radiant shine." Too bold, I burn these tender wings of mine."

GRANONS

(a) The whiskers of a cat. From the Old French *grenon*. Of Teutonic origin. Compare the Old Norse *gron* a mustache. "If the long hairs growing about her [the cat's] mouth [which some call Granons] be cut away, she loseth her courage." This cannot be true.

FOVILLA

(a) The substance contained in pollen-cells. Modern Latin used in Linnaeus in 1766. In 1734, Linnaeus calls it *farina*. "Emitting a subtle and elastic vapour, or sort of fovilla which swims on the surface."

GOR

(b) A chick or unfledged bird. Obsolete, except for dialect. Of unknown origin, but note the Old English *gorb* greedy, voracious. "The Old Birds of Prey, with their young Gors, which they were training up to swallow Kingdoms at once."

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SUNDAY TIPS

The Sunday Times: Buy T&N, Celtic, Robert Walters, Avon Rubber; Hold Zeneca. The Sunday Telegraph: Buy Midland Independent Newspapers, Orange, Booker. The Mail on Sunday: Buy Marks & Spencer. The Observer: Hold Cadbury Schweppes, Royal & Sun Alliance. Sunday Business: Buy Charter, Cosalt; Hold Crabtree.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Rate
Australia \$	2.14	1.98
Austria Sch	20.37	18.87
Belgium Fr	69.77	65.47
Canada \$	2.300	2.140
Cyprus Cyp£	0.854	0.798
Denmark Kr	11.06	10.28
Finland Mk	8.80	8.15
France Fr	9.89	9.34
Germany DM	2.51	2.30
Greece Dr	451	425
Hong Kong \$	13.10	12.10
Ireland Pt	1.20	1.01
Ireland Pt	5.71	5.36
Italy Lit	2361	2086
Japan Yen	809.00	753.00
Malta	0.659	0.604
Netherlands Gld	3.251	3.031
New Zealand \$	2.44	2.22
Norway Kr	11.70	10.90
Portugal Esc	207.00	198.50
S Africa Rd	7.15	6.36
Spain Ptas	244.50	227.50
Sweden Kr	12.35	12.15
Switzerland Fr	2.51	2.33
Turkey Lira	208700	194700
USA \$	1.708	1.578

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading on Friday.

CHANGE ON WEEK

THE POUND

US dollar 1.6052 (-0.0238)
German mark 2.7590 (+0.0096)
Exchange index 98.1 (-0.2)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 2920.3 (+72.8)
FTSE 100 4420.3 (+112.0)
New York Dow Jones 7000.89 (+123.15)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 18198.74 (-358.26)

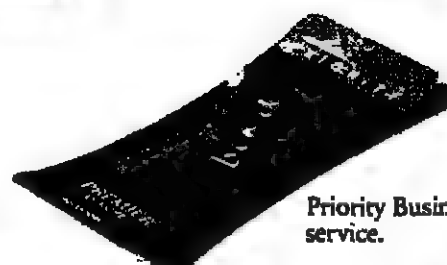
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Proposals to protect assets from care costs

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

RETIRED people could pay annual insurance premiums to save their houses from being sold to pay future nursing home bills under proposals in a government White Paper to be issued today.

However, insurance experts believe that premiums are likely to be about 1 per cent of the value of the house annually, costing £50 a month for the owner of an average £60,000 home with £10,000 of savings.

The controversial and long-awaited draft Bill on long-term care, to be published by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, will propose a partnership scheme whereby individuals may buy insurance to ring-fence their assets and

prevent a proportion of them being used to pay for care. It will not include proposals on immediate-needs annuities or equity release schemes.

Mr Dorrell will suggest that for every £1 of insurance taken out, the Government will "disregard" £1.50 of assets on top of the £10,000 an individual is already allowed to keep.

The proposals have already attracted criticism from charities that believe they will be beyond the means of most elderly people, and from insurers, who say that only 100,000 extra people will be helped. They claim that two million could have benefited had the scheme protected a further £1 of assets for every £1 insured.

The proposed Bill is the result of consultation on options announced last May. Currently 20,000 people buy long-term care policies worth a total of £73 million in premium income every year.

Under the present means-testing system, people with assets worth less than £10,000 do not have to pay anything towards their long-term care costs. Those with between £10,000 and £16,000 have to make a contribution, and those with more — including their homes — have to meet the bill in full.

It is claimed that up to 40,000 people sell their homes each year to meet care fees, which can top £20,000 a year.

Peter Gatenby, appointed actuary and director of PPP lifetime care, expressed disappointment at the proposals. He said: "The Government could have increased the protection to £2 per £1, but has shied away from doing that because we have no idea how many people will want to buy such policies, and they are an open-ended commitment to governments of the future."

Nomura's chief set to resign

HIDEO SAKAMAKI, the president of Nomura Securities Co. Japan's biggest stockbroker, is expected to resign to take the blame for suspected irregular deals now being investigated by Japan's securities watchdog (Robert Whymant writes).

The stockbroker admitted that it ran discretionary accounts for clients. These are alleged to be connected with *sokaiya* racketeers, who extort money from companies by threatening to expose shady business practices. Mr Sakamaki is reported to have offered to resign once the Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission has completed its inquiry.



Thornton has chocolate lollipops of Screaming Lord Sutch, left, Paddy Ashdown, John Major and Tony Blair

Retailers seek shoppers' vote with election memorabilia

Political kitsch may prove to be an investment, Morag Preston finds

Election fever has already hit the high streets. Supermarkets, bars, bookshops, and novelty outlets are cashing in on the contest in a consumer frenzy that hails from America.

Cross-party political products are being lickered, drunk, read, and worn. In conjunction with The Rack, both the Conservative and Labour Party have brought out a snazzy line in election neckwear. At £11.99 in silk, or £2 cheaper in polyester, the choice is between Labour's repeat roses on a red or even blue background or the Tories' red demon eyes on black. The Rack, which is still talking with the Liberal Democrats, will pay each party design fees of about £1,000.

If sales in caricature candles are anything to go by,

Labour and Conservative are currently neck and neck. Turnover at The Candle Shop in London's Covent Garden is expected to increase fivefold in the run up to a general election. Seven-inch wax models of an all-grey John Major and a smiling Tony Blair, at £7.95 each, are sold as the acceptable equivalent to the voodoo doll. "An awful lot of burning of the enemy goes on," says Sue Spear, who opened the shop in 1971. Ted Heath, Tony Benn, and Margaret Thatcher, are still popular, but Paddy Ashdown did not even make it into a mould. "He doesn't raise enough

feeling one way or another," says Sue Spear.

The recently opened Politicos, a bookshop-cum-salon for Westminster groupies, is reporting a rush in 55p political postcards. Iain Dale, the owner and a former political lobbyist for the Tory party, took the idea for the shop from similar ones in Washington. "People tend to buy memorabilia that makes fun of their own party," says Mr Dale.

For the first time, Penguin has introduced a series of paperback pocketbooks aimed at the virgin voter. Why Vote Labour? Why Vote Conservative? and Why Vote

Liberal Democrat? are retailing at £3.99 each. The political parties boast their own catalogues, offering a range of brightly coloured gimmicks from baseball caps to bumper stickers. Hip young researchers at Conservative Central Office are rolling their computer mice over propaganda mats emblazoned "New Labour, New Danger".

In the food range, Thornton has 49p chocolate lollipops cast in the likeness of political leaders. For the last general election, the confectioners sold more than 170,000 jelly lookalikes of John Major, Paddy Ashdown, and Neil Kinnock. This year, Tony Blair has replaced Mr Kinnock and Screaming Lord Sutch has been added to widen the appeal.

Not to miss out, Tesco has launched a poster campaign parodying political promises, and Asda will soon be lining its shelves with its Election Ales. Bottles of Tony's Tipples, Major's Mild and Ashdown's Ale will go on sale for £1.49 each. With cartoons of the leaders splashed across the beer labels, the supermarket chain is hoping that maybe one day they will become collectors' items.

Two years ago, a Lady Thatcher teapot sold for nine times the original £20 price at Phillips the auctioneers. John Sandon, head of ceramics at Phillips, says: "Look out for something that's well produced and unusual — you may never get the chance again."

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

BA left with a case to answer

MORE WOE for British Airways. Senior travel trade folk arrived in Berlin on Saturday for an industry shindig to discover the unthinkable — BA had left half their cases behind. The passengers, among more than 50,000 professionals heading for the mighty ITB Berlin travel trade show, had to wait 12 hours or more for the items to turn up. Several were heard loudly proclaiming that they would never fly the World's Favourite Airline again.

BA, which suffered unspeakable horrors last November when 11,000 cases piled up at Heathrow, pinned the blame on a faulty baggage conveyor — operated by BAA — but conceded: "At the end of the day, it impacts on the airline. It does us no good at all." BAA is installing new baggage equipment at Heathrow, and says there have been some teething problems. BA will consider awarding compensation to passengers caught up in the mess, but added: "It really depends upon the case." If they can find it.

Mercury Asset Management be wearing on the big day? "A pair of Levi's jeans — they don't make Dockers in size 42. I'm a great big chap, who has never worn sneakers in his life, and I don't intend to start now."

Whistle-blower

WORDS of wisdom from Ken Bates. Pontificating on the subject of dodgy referees and the City, the chairman of Chelsea says: "It's said that results are too important to be left to an amateur's decision, particularly now that there's so much City investment in the game. Well, the City knew what the rules were when they came in, and although they are not averse to changing the City rules when it suits them, football is different." One-nil to Mr Bates.

Business brains

OXFORD Molecular is staking its claim as Britain's most academic company. Most recently, Graham Richards has been appointed to head the new combined chemistry department at Oxford University. David Jackson, chief operating officer, is a professor at Nottingham University. Anthony Rees, a director, is a professor at Bath University; there are five Nobel laureates on its Scientific Advisory Board; and 73 out of 140 staff have either PhDs, DPhil, or MScs. Professor Richards was the co-founder of Oxford Molecular, a database for the discovery of new medicines. Tall, handsome, and a born runner, he is known as "The Six Million Dollar Man" — not to mention the money he has made from the \$400 million public company.



Bates: telling it like it is

The fur flies

THE Body Shop is taking Durham City Council to the cleaners. Anita Roddick's beauty haven has intervened in a dispute within the Labour-run council over its mayoral robes. Local controversy arose when the council decided to replace the musquash trim on a 15-year-old robe with synthetic fur. The work just happened to coincide with the arrival of vegetarian Neil Griffin, who takes over as mayor in May. The £500 bill, including general repairs and cleaning, was criticised by Nigel Martin, Lib-Dem member, as a needless expense and pandering to animal rights groups. Now the Middlesbrough branch of The Body Shop has agreed to pick up the tab.

MORAG PRESTON

Something's afoot

RICHARD ROYDS is working round the clock in his attempt to persuade 200,000 City professionals to dress down for Red Nose Day. His crusade is to raise about £1 million in aid of Comic Relief. But what will this managing director of

Adviser's mis-selling move

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

KNIGHT WILLIAMS, the former financial adviser at the centre of a mis-selling scandal, has submitted proposals to the Investors Compensation Scheme (ICS) that could settle up to 1,200 of the compensation claims made against it.

The company has asked the ICS to help in identifying claimants, most of them pensioners who may have lost up to £25 million in high-income investments it promoted.

However, in its letter to the ICS, it emphasises that its offer of an ex-gratia payment does not admit liability.

An ICS spokesman said that it hoped to meet Knight Williams directors shortly. The two sides have yet to decide how much each will pay.

Kenneth Jordan, chairman of the Knight Williams Investors Action Group, hoped the new offer would improve on its first offer in July 1996,

which he said had amounted to a few hundred pounds for each investor. He urged investors to seek the group's advice before accepting any offers.

Mr Jordan also attacked the ICS for "repeatedly renegeing on its self-imposed deadlines", leading to long delays in paying compensation. The ICS said that it was treating cases urgently but identifying claimants had taken longer than expected.

Benefits of EMU enthusiasm

Unless a lot of us have a late change of mind, or are deceiving the opinion pollsters, the Labour Party will win the May general election with a good working majority.

Economic life under the early stages of a Labour government has been well analysed — there is a broad agreement, for example, that interest rates will have to rise in the latter part of 1997 and early 1998 (although

probably to no more than 7 per cent, and that inflation will fall to close to 2.5 per cent at the end of 1997. These factors are largely legacies of an outgoing Tory Government and are well discounted by the gilt market.

The Budget planned for early summer might include details about a windfall tax on utilities. The size and shape of this tax will affect government finances and, therefore, the

market. However, Labour has been out of office for many years and it would be judicious for the new ministers to take a good, long look at the books rather than producing a hasty policy decision. It would be preferable if windfall tax details were delayed until a later Budget.

In any case, we think that the biggest impact Labour will have on the gilt market in the latter part of 1997 will come from a different source: its attitude to monetary union.

The Labour leadership is pro-monetary union, but, for all the talk of when would be the right time for sterling to join EMU, the fact remains that the party is first committed to a referendum on the subject. According to opinion polls, only a minority of British people are in favour of monetary union, although many of the others would hope to be better informed by the time a vote takes place.

It will be Labour's task (should the enthusiasm for monetary union survive the hostility of some backbenchers) to present arguments showing how much more beneficial life would be within EMU, compared with "isolation" outside it.

With effort, the party should be able to turn public opinion around. Just as many of us believed 20-odd years ago that we were voting for little more than closer trade links with near-Europe in the original Common Market referendum, the popular decision this time will probably owe more to how (and what) arguments are presented to us than to thorough analysis of the situation.

The best time for Labour to help to form the "right" opin-

ion is early in the life of the new Parliament, the honeymoon period when its popularity is at its peak. Consequently, we can expect the ruling party to talk up the benefits of EMU from the outset.

This is good news for the many gilt market bulls, whose premise is that sterling will eventually join EMU and that UK yields will converge to those on the Continent. Current gilt yields for ten-year maturities stand about 1.8 percentage points above comparable German and French bonds on a like-for-like basis. This figure will surely fall if the dominant sentiment is of convergence to a common currency, even if there is a delay to the proposed EMU start date in 1999.

The yield/maturity profiles of bonds in the UK and on the Continent already imply a substantial long-term fall in the yield difference between them, it can be argued. However, this does not preclude gilts outperforming continental bonds on a view to the end of the year.

The most likely scenario for German bunds, for example, is that after hitting a mid-year peak, prices will fall in the second half of 1997 as economic recovery starts. Meanwhile, EMU optimism should prevent a sell-off in gilts, so the gilt-bund yield spread narrows.

With good economic fundamentals, gilts have the potential to be the best-performing major bond market in 1997. Enthusiasm for monetary union should ensure the fulfilment of that potential.

STEPHEN SCOTT
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81

Spring '97

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Managers urge talks on European social chapter

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

BRITAIN'S managers today urge a new government to engage fully in talks on the European social chapter — in effect, to end the UK's opt-out from new employment law from Brussels.

In a pre-election business manifesto, the Institute of Management calls for "credible" policies on the economy, business, education, jobs and Europe.

The institute, which has 76,000 individual and 600 corporate members, says that Europe is "vital" for the UK, and the Government must

now direct its attention towards "constructive engagement".

It says that the Conservative Government's "frequently antagonistic stance towards the EU does not help UK organisations" to benefit from Europe.

As forecast in *The Times*, the institute says in direct contradiction to Government claims of the opinion of business, that "it is clearly the case that, for some large organisations, the social chapter does not hold many fears", and that some organisations

have already implemented its proposals.

The institute says: "A blanket opt-out is too blunt an instrument. Full involvement in EU negotiations on social chapter proposals would enable the UK to emphasise the benefits of maintaining flexibility in labour markets and to tailor EU social policy to the specific characteristics of the UK business environment."

On the economy, the institute urges the adoption of an inflation target of 3 per cent or less, independence for the Bank of England, and tight

control of government borrowing and spending. The Government should maintain support for labour market flexibility, become "less parochial" on competition policy and bring in legislation to allow companies a statutory right to interest on late payment of debt.

Roger Young, director-general of the institute, says: "Managers have a clear recipe for ensuring Britain's global competitiveness. It combines the ingredients of sound economic management, lifetime learning and flexibility."

Christian Salvesen rebel to end attempt to halt payout

By Fraser Nelson

SIR Gerald Elliot, the former chairman of Christian Salvesen, is this week expected to abandon his campaign to halt the logistics group's plans for a £100 million special dividend.

Sir Gerald, 72, is understood to have failed to persuade institutional investors that the payout would leave the company with dangerously high levels of debt.

After weeks of canvassing private investors by telephone, he claims to have the informal support of shareholders who speak for 10 per cent. Added to the core of rebels who command 14 per cent of the capital, this leaves him well short of any prospect of victory. About 44 per cent of the stock is held by individuals, mainly 400 descendants of the founding Salvesen family.

The matter will be decided at a special shareholder meeting on Thursday, when a vote will be held on a consolidation that will replace every nine existing shares with eight new ones.

While the consolidation is not a contested issue, Sir Gerald intends to use it as a "Trojan vote" to halt the dividend payment and shelve management plans to hive off Aggreko, the group's specialist hire business. He also proposes installing John Grant, former finance



Sir Gerald Elliot's campaign has cost him £400,000

director of LucasVarity, as executive chairman. Scottish Widows and Standard Life, which together hold 4.8 per cent of the company, support Christopher Masters, the chief executive. Morgan Stanley and PDM, which own 10 per cent and 5 per cent respectively, are also understood to be siding with the board. The campaign is understood to have cost Sir Gerald about £400,000.

NatWest 'black hole' report due

Executives at NatWest Markets are bracing themselves for a damning report into the £50 million "black hole" trading scandal. Preliminary findings into the trading activities of Kyriacos Papouis are expected later this week.

Neil Dodgson, Mr Papouis's superior at NatWest, has been suspended pending the outcome of the investigation, and further suspensions are possible. Coopers & Lybrand, which is investigating the affair with Linklaters & Paines, the City law firm, is thought to have established that widespread transactions went undetected for up to 12 months. Initial investigations suggest that Mr Papouis overvalued the options he traded for more than a year, allowing him to accumulate a considerable loss. He is not thought to have acted for personal gain.

Vodafone bonus

Vodafone, the mobile phone operator with more than 2.8 million subscribers, is to pay a 41 per cent share of the cellular phone market, today launches a customer rewards programme with Air Miles Travels Promotions.

Names no more

Two famous City names — James Capel and Samuel Montagu — are to disappear under a reorganisation by HSBG, their parent bank. The firms will be merged with HSBG Investment Banking, and their names will no longer be used from October.

Stores bidders

Kingfisher, owner of Woolworth, Comet and Superdrug, is being tipped as a prime candidate to buy 134 high street outlets from Littlewoods, the pools-to-retail combine. Tesco and Asda are among potential bidders for the stores, which are set to sell for at least £500 million.

Co-op 'targeted'

Andrew Regan, the entrepreneur behind Lanica Trust, is reputed to be planning a hostile bid for the Co-op's non-food businesses. One option would see him offering £1,000 each to the Co-op's 500,000 members, but steps are already being taken to block such an attempt.

Tax loophole to be closed

By Adam Jones

KENNETH CLARKE, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has tabled a new clause to the Finance Bill to prevent life offices from using an annuity scheme to avoid their £1.5 billion tax bills. Under the present system, life offices are able to claim tax relief on the in-

come paid out on the annuities that they issue.

Life offices are already taxed on the investment profits that fund annuity payments, but the Government says they are creating artificial annuities, sold to banks and other financial institutions. It claims that they inflate the amount of

income paid for a short period. That is followed by a lengthy period where the payments retreat to a "trivial" size.

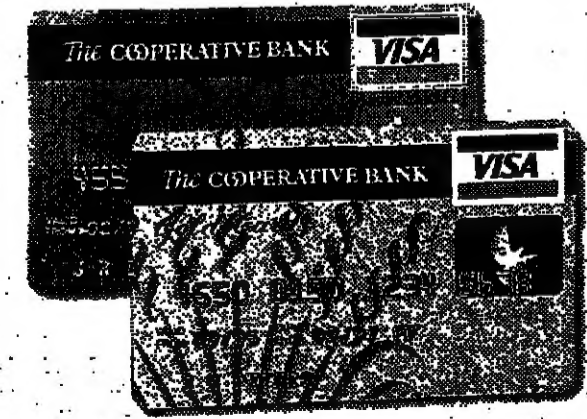
Such an arrangement can mean that the tax relief on the income claimed dwarfs the tax paid in funding the annuity.

The new clause treats these erratic annuities as though they lasted only as long as the period of big payments, capping the tax relief potential.

Michael Jack, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said: "If unchecked, the use of such annuity arrangements could lead to the erosion of the entire tax base of life assurance companies. The Chancellor made it clear in his Budget speech that he would not hesitate to take any necessary action to secure the tax base against abuse."

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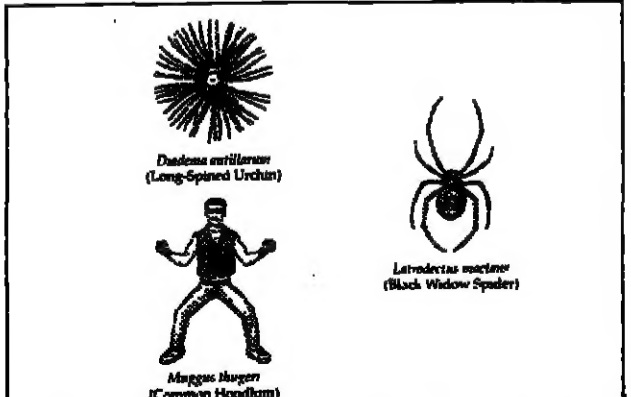
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Alternative Investment Market

Investors persuade ALEA to shelve float

ALEA, a start-up company which has secured a licence to operate the first online lottery in Russia, has shelved its plans to raise funds privately.

The company, which jointly owns the licence with the Russian Committee for the Protection of Peace, is understood to be looking at alternative ways to raise the £32.5

million it needs to expand. Its absence will not be felt by the junior exchange, with five companies waiting to join over the next six weeks. Q Group, an Israeli CD-ROM publisher that specialises in educational titles, is joining next Monday, valued at £19 million. It has raised £5 million through a placing.

John Bryce, which makes security systems for airlines, also joins this month — the

ninth Israeli company to secure a London listing. It is raising £7 million through a placing, and will be valued at about £20 million.

Fincham Industrial, which offers service support for blue-chip clients, is raising £5 million for acquisitions and is likely to join the market in three weeks' time valued at £12 million. Medhens, which runs four bookshops in the Home Counties, plans

to join the market next month. It is raising £1 million for expansion, and will be valued at about £5 million.

Medway Insurance also joins next month, and is expected to be valued at £70 million. It wants funds to buy Hansa Re, the US insurer, and plans to reinsure with Lloyd's. Apologies are due for the errors in last week's table.

FRASER NELSON

1996/97	High	Low	Mid cap (millions)	Price pence	Wtdy +/-	Ytd %	P/E	1996/97	High	Low	Mid cap (millions)	Price pence	Wtdy +/-	Ytd %	P/E
159	100		12.00 AFA Systems	100	-19		11.0	4	9		5.85 J Lewis Hord	4	-3		22.7
160	101		21.80 AMCO Corp	101	-18	5.1		74	48		9.30 Jantrex	48	-3		
161	102		18.00 Alcoa Inc	102	-17	5.1		4	2		4.20 J Corp	2	-1		
162	103		18.00 Alcoa Inc	103	-16	5.1	20.3	3	1		0.12 J Corp	1	-1		
163	104		18.00 Alcoa Inc	104	-15	5.1		131	85		54.50 KS Banknote	85	-1		
164	105		20.50 Alcoa Inc	105	-14	4.2		5	47		5.00 J Corp	47	-1		
165	106		16.40 Active Imaging	106	-13	3.9		100	100		34.30 L Sisco	100	-3		
166	107		25.50 Aia Group	107	-12	3.9		180	180		25.50 L Sisco	180	-3	4.0	13.1
167	108		10.10 Alcan	108	-11	2.3		120	120		25.50 L Sisco	120	-3	2.5	10.3
168	109		31.20 Alcan	109	-10	7.4		370	370		25.50 L Sisco	370	-100	2.6	10.2
169	110		10.10 Alcan	110	-9	16.3		17	11		0.05 L Sisco	11	-2		14.9
170	111		6.40 Alcan	111	-8	3.7		17	11		0.05 L Sisco	11	-2		
171	112		0.37 Alpha Design	112	-7	2.9		53	40		0.10 L Sisco	40	-1	0.2	50.7
172	113		11.15 Alpha Design	113	-6	2.9		53	40		0.10 L Sisco	40	-1	0.2	50.7
173	114		49.80 Am St Brewery	114	-5	11.7		109	111		24.10 L Sisco	111	-6		
174	115		6.50 Am St Brewery	115	-4	7.3		109	111		24.10 L Sisco	111	-6		
175	116		8.20 Amco	116	-3	7.3		109	111		24.10 L Sisco	111	-6		
176	117		23.50 Amco	117	-2	1.0		42	169		7.00 L Sisco	169	-10	1.1	32.1
177	118		1.78 Amco	118	-1	56.4		2	2		4.33 L Sisco	2	-10		
178	119		56.20 Amco	119	0	2		13	14		0.11 L Sisco	14	-2		
179	120		1.46 Amco	120	1	64		315	147		30.59 MTL Inc	147	-3	3.6	16.7
180	121		44.50 Amco	121	2	142		109	177		9.12 Magna Corp	177	-10		
181	122		1.46 Amco	122	3	2		25	8		0.27 M & S	8	-2	2.6	11.7
182	123		1.46 Amco	123	4	3.0		12	10		3.49 M & S	10	-1	0.3	2.1
183	124		6.19 Amco	124	5	3.5		117	88		62.50 Magna Corp	88	-10		20.5
184	125		1.46 Amco	125	6	3.8		117	88		62.50 Magna Corp	88	-10		20.5
185	126		0.34 Amco	126	7	70		112	82		0.11 Magna Corp	82	-5	5.1	11.5
186	127		0.34 Amco	127	8	70		112	82		0.11 Magna Corp	82	-5	5.1	11.5
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258	199		0.34 Amco	199	80	70		112	82		0.11 Magna Corp	82	-5	5.1	11.5
259	200		0.34 Amco	200	81	70		112	82		0.11 Magna Corp	82	-5	5.1	11.5
260	2														

Oliver August on Asda's hopeful, and woes of MDs who would be MPs

Only the brave attempt leap from boardroom to Commons

All political parties are courting the business vote in the run-up to a general election. Tony Blair schmoozes the City. Michael Heseltine fights back in anger to hold the Tories' traditional business support.

For all their campaigning, however, the parties are being deserted by businessmen themselves. The number of parliamentary candidates with managerial experience in the private sector has fallen dramatically. Although the electorate is more interested than ever in economic competence, the commercially literate prefer to stay put rather than become involved in politics.

In the Conservative Party, the deal had always been that one first gets rich and then gets elected. While still at Oxford, Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister to be, famously mapped out, on the back of an envelope, his path from entrepreneurship to politics.

The opposite is increasingly the case today. Impoverished researchers and councillors enter the Commons and some end up lining their pockets with the help of lobbyists. Even that may be over. After the next election, the business acumen assembled in the Commons could reach an all-time low.

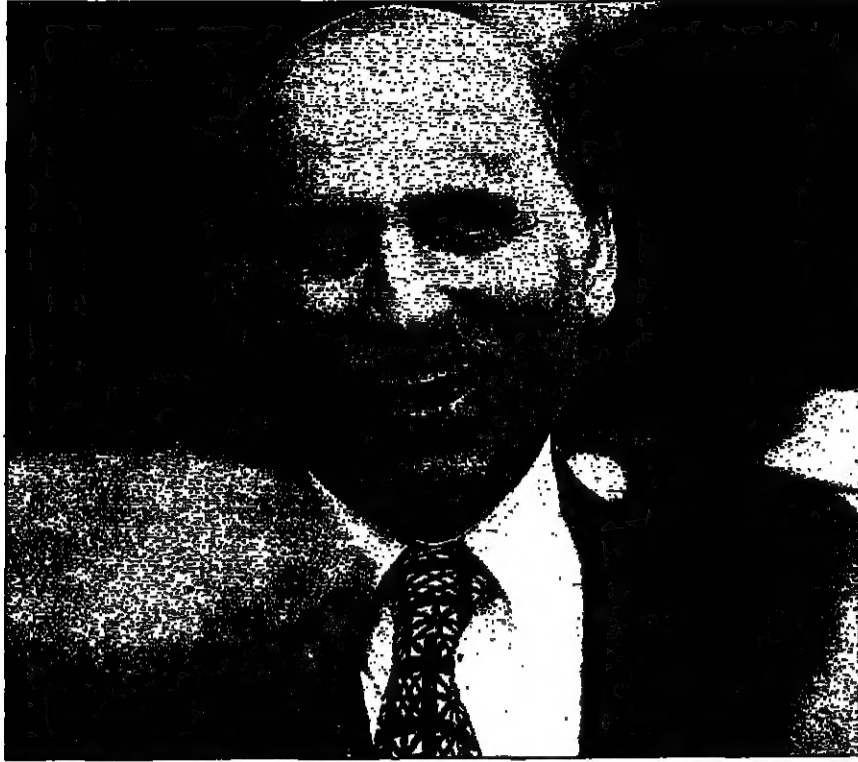
The Public Policy Unit, a think tank, has conducted a survey of future MPs. Andrew Lansley, one of the authors and a Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate himself, said: "The number of prospective candidates with business experience is in decline. The occupational background of the new intake has shifted away from traditional areas such as commerce, manufacturing and law."

The only area of business better represented now is financial services, after the 1980s boom in international finance. Lansley said: "Labour has far fewer trade unionists and fewer people from the shop floor. Many candidates now come from the voluntary sector, while the numbers from the private sector remain very small. The big battalions are from colleges and councils."

The Tories still have the largest business contingent, but it is primarily made up of analysts and merchant bankers rather than self-made industrialists or managers. Many Tory candidates are already pseudo-politicians; they



Ronnie Fearn, left, for the Liberal Democrats, and Labour's Mohammed Sarwar are rare as candidates from commerce



work for an MP or are public relations consultants trying to lobby Westminster.

On the basis of information supplied by the Public Policy Unit, one can calculate that only 15 of the 160 new parliamentary candidates most likely to win a seat come from managerial positions in the private sector and a further 14 from finance.

Why are so many undoubtedly ambitious business folk deserting the quest for power and glory? Richard Branson might get elected even if he stood for the Monster Raving Loony Party, such is his public appeal. Yet, he becomes unnaturally coy when asked about politics.

Millionaires at a recent City lunch agreed, as they tucked into their £30 steaks, that the idea of standing for Parliament was simply "off-putting". Some of them earn an MP's annual salary in a week. Getting out of bed for £43,000 per annum does not appeal.

Their predecessors 20 or 30 years ago had the option of entering politics while staying in business. However, constituencies no longer tolerate gentlemen politicians and employers loathe part-time executives. Lansley said: "The sacrifice for bankers and other executives is substantial. Companies will not pay them hundreds of

thousands of pounds if they don't get 110 per cent effort."

Money is by no means the only factor putting businessmen off. Politics is risky, and a failed attempt to enter Parliament could end a business career, as well as a political one. Having to campaign for months before an election puts severe strain on any executive's ability to do the day job.

There is also the prospect of years of backbench boredom. Ministerial jobs with powers to equal those of an executive director are few. Even in the era of Select Committees, most MPs are "lobby fodder".

The few moments in the limelight that a backbench MP may get are usually unwanted public scrutiny. The love child of an executive may go unnoticed. As a politician, the same executive will be hounded by the tabloids.

Given all the drawbacks, who are the brave businessmen still keen on public service? And why do they want to do it? Jason Hollands, of BESt Investment, the brokers, the Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate for Easington, says: "Some people simply have it in their blood. I want to see the bigger picture and engage in the battle of ideas."

Hollands's interest in politics was awakened at school

and while studying history at Oxford. He joined the Conservative Association and today he is the chairman of the Young Conservatives. "Oxford is such a great place," he muses. "It really focuses people and makes them obsessive about whatever they do."

When the official campaign begins, he will take a few weeks' holiday to woo the voters. Easington currently has a 27,000 Labour majority. It was Ramsay MacDonald's seat and is flanked by Tony Blair's and Peter Mandelson's constituencies. "Somehow I don't think it will be a holiday," says Hollands.

Hollands's fellow Tory candidates with business experience include Howard Flight, of the Guinness Flight Global Asset Management Fund, Archie Norman, Asda chairman, Nick St Aubyn, a former Kleinwort Benson banker, Sebastian Grigg, of Goldman Sachs, and Francis Maude, the former Financial Secretary to the Treasury and presently a managing director with Morgan Stanley. It is very much a City-dominated list.

Labour's finance specialists are thinner on the ground. In keeping with the rest of Labour's candidate pool,

about half are women. Kate Green, a Barclays Bank manager, is after Peter Brooke's central London seat. Becoming an MP would be her second job — she already looks after the cash dispensers there. Labour also has two Bank of England economists, Ruth Kelly and John Adams, as well as Tommy Hutchinson, a NatWest adviser.

Liberal Democrats seem to be finding it particularly hard to attract entrepreneurial talent. Ronnie Fearn, a bank official, ex-MP and former party transport spokesman, is standing in Southampton. Asked for a short self-description, he replied: "One of the most energetic, hard-working and likeable Liberal Democrats — quotes from TV and press, not my description."

Some prospective candidates have already fallen by the wayside before an election is called. John Evans, the original Tory hope for the Nottinghamshire seat of Sherwood, received a suspended prison sentence after trying to obtain a refund for an overcoat at Marks & Spencer last spring. A court was told that he had mass-produced fake Marks & Spencer receipts in an attempt to get even with the store chain after a planning dispute. Evans, the director of

a design company, withdrew his candidacy after being charged.

Another Tory prospective candidate, Hugh Neil, had hoped to be the party's first black MP, but overdid it. Neil had claimed to be chairman of the imaginary Kenton and Middlesex Building Society. Constituency bosses did not check, but deselected him when they found out.

Politics can be a far rockier path than business. Mohammed Sarwar, the Indo-Scottish millionaire Labour supporter, hit the headlines last May. For two years, he fought with local activists for the Glasgow Govan constituency. Labour's high command had to intervene when Sarwar lost a first constituency ballot in controversial circumstances. Losing an Asian, as well as a businessman, candidate would have been disastrous given the general lack of either. The £10 million cash-and-carry mogul eventually triumphed with the help of Walworth Road. However, few other successful businessmen would tolerate the ordeals that Sarwar had to endure to be a candidate.

Emboldened by success, Labour party chiefs rescued another candidate with a business background late last year. Fabian Hamilton was selected for Leeds North East after the leftwinger Liz Davies was deselected. However, Davies decided to leave as noisily as she had arrived.

The spotlight of publicity has shone hard on Hamilton's record as a company director. His business history includes two liquidated printing companies and seven county court judgments for bad debts. It is hardly an advertisement for Labour's new-found zeal for prudent capitalism.

Links between people of commerce and the economics side of politics are a long tradition. Unusually, though, the main priority for the few remaining commercially literate politicians today will not be economic policy *per se*, but the European issue. The Conservative Howard Flight is the most vigorous exponent of a majority standpoint. "I have Eurosceptic views and I am in favour of a referendum on a single currency," he said. A Euro-friendly Tony Blair may yet despair of the men and women of business.

Archie entertains an honourable ambition



Archie Norman: cream of the crop of Tory hopefuls

Provided the voters of Tunbridge Wells swallow their *amour-propre* and elect a shopkeeper, Archie Norman will be a star of the 1997 intake of Tory MPs. Asda's chairman is already being cast as the next Michael Heseltine. He certainly has flair, business experience and undisguised ambition.

Archie, as he is known to his family and to 75,000 Asda employees, has had a fairly-tale career so far. After Cambridge and Harvard he went to McKinsey, the management consultancy. His managerial skills, including the first-names-only policy, are McKinsey standard issue. So when he refers to Asda he is talking about the CBI's director-general, Adair Turner, a McKinsey colleague.

Archie was made chief executive of Asda at 37, having been headhunted from the post of finance director at Kingfisher where he made his name. Both companies did famously well under his stewardship. At 42, he has taken on the chairmanship of the supermarket chain to devote more time to selling himself instead of the groceries. "Most businessmen don't achieve what they want to achieve early in life," he says without a hint of modesty. "I have been a director of an FT-SE 100 company for 12 years. That kind of experience most people cannot match."

Parliament needs people with real-world business experience, Archie agrees. "Westminster should not be the domain of full-time professionals. I want to bring my background to bear. Business should

have proper representation in Parliament. But I am not someone with just a bunch of special interests. I have ideas, a fresh perspective."

In terms of ideas, Archie is a stormtrooper rather than an armchair general. He leads loudly from the front. His many campaigns at Asda have included full frontal attacks for Sunday trading, and over discounting of books and medicines. The campaigns, inevitably, involve television appearances where he champions the rights of ordinary trolley-pushing folk.

The biggest idea on his political shelf is Euroscepticism. "Under no foreseeable circumstances will the Tories agree to a single currency," he says. "It would be helpful to clarify our position before the election but the Prime Minister has handled the situation well. Business people are particularly concerned about the social chapter."

Archie already has the self-confidence of a Cabinet minister, a job he undoubtedly covets. The Asda chairman is not leaving his £500,000 position to squeak from the backbenches. He is seeking new commanding heights. "There are strong similarities between politicians and businessmen," he believes. "Both lead and manage large numbers of people. The same qualities are needed — forthrightness, independence, integrity. I am used to expressing myself so that 75,000 people can understand."

A look at Archie's leadership methods offers some clues to his political style. He

turned Asda from a debt-laden decline into a bright and profitable operation with the help of a little management voodoo. This included holding lotteries in which staff can win use of the company Jaguar for a month, forcing everyone to stand at meetings to encourage debate, and a red "don't disturb" cap which is passed around the head office. Sir Humphrey would presumably get the cap in the Archie ministry, constituents could be joy-riding in the ministerial limo and Cabinet meetings would become quasi-cocktail parties with everyone wearing name tags.

The idiosyncratic chairman is no stranger to gaffes. Tory elders were embarrassed when he told the *New Statesman* magazine that the party was destined to lose the election.

In another interview, for *Tatler*, Archie said he wanted to be an MP so that he could spend more time with his family. Labour helpfully pointed out that this was the usual Tory explanation for leaving the Commons after he had said that being a politician was one of the few jobs in the world "that we can do together. There is no way you could take your wife to work at Asda."

His election chances are good. Tunbridge Wells is still as safe a Tory seat as one can hope to get. If the fairy-tale continues, the Asda chairman may again rise fast and one day become the "Right Honourable Archie". Push Tunbridge Wells may even overcome its distaste and allow in an Asda store.

RADIO CHOICE

Water, water everywhere

Waterland. Radio 4, 2.00pm.

At what point does the here and now metamorphose into history? Steve Chambers's serialisation of Grahame Swift's novel, set in the reclaimed marshland of the Fens, poses the question in its opening few minutes. It is posed by Tom Crick, played by Roy Marsden, the history teacher narrating the story. In the classroom from which he is soon to be banished, Crick is a compelling teller of true tales. They are all to do with his ancestors, and is, their home. I say "was and is" because *Waterland* lives in both past and present. A complex structure, then, but not confusing so long as you keep on recalling Crick's self-portrait as "an expert on the past until time flows back on itself and the past returns".

Vandeville Red-Hot and Blue. Radio 2, 10.00pm.

The American singer Marilyn Middleton Pollock has a voice made for cabaret. Radio 2 must think highly of her because tonight marks the start of her third series of songs from vandeville's heyday. They include *Madeline Whoopee* and, undeniably, *Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime*. She is stoutly supported by Steve Mello's Chicago Hoods, a band that embraces some top-class soloists — a fact the live audience acknowledges by constantly bursting into applause. We expect this sort of thing from American audiences, but it's a rare happening up Birmingham way. Peter Daville

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe and Boy Lard live from Manchester. 8.00 Simon Mayo. 12.00 Jo Wiley. 2.00pm Nicky Campbell. 4.00 Kevn Greening. 6.15 Newsbeat. 6.30 Evening Session with Steve Lamacq. 8.30 Andy Kershaw. 10.30 Mary Ann Hobbs. 1.00am Clare Sturgess. 4.00 Clive Wainman with the Early Breakfast Show.

RADIO 2

6.00am Alex Lester. 7.30 Sarah Kennedy. 9.30 Ken Bruce. 11.30 Jimmy Young. 1.30pm Debbie Thorne. 3.00 Ed Stewart. 5.00 Chris Serle. 7.00 Shove Wright. 8.00 The Movers. 7.30 Maccin. 10.00 Countdown. 10.30 Big Band Special. 9.00 Humphrey Lyttelton. 10.00 Vandeville Red Hot and Blue. See Steve Mello. 1.00am Clare Sturgess. 4.00 Clive Wainman with the Early Breakfast Show.

RADIO 5 LIVE

6.00am Morning Reports. 6.00 The Breakfast Programme. 9.00 The Magazine with Diana Madge. 12.00 Midday with Mair. Includes at 12.35pm Moneycheck. 2.00 Ruscio on Five. 4.00 Julian Venables. 5.00 News. 7.00 News Extra. 7.30 Voices of Sport. Raymond Brooks. 8.00 The Monday Match. Liverpool v Newcastle. 10.00 News. 10.30 News. 11.00 News. 11.30 News. 12.00 News. 12.30 News. 1.00am News. 1.30am News. 2.00am News. 2.30am News. 3.00am News. 3.30am News. 4.00am News. 4.30am News. 5.00am News. 5.30am News. 6.00am News. 6.30am News. 7.00am News. 7.30am News. 8.00am News. 8.30am News. 9.00am News. 9.30am News. 10.00am News. 10.30am News. 11.00am News. 11.30am News. 12.00am News. 12.30am News. 1.00am News. 1.30am News. 2.00am News. 2.30am News. 3.00am News. 3.30am News. 4.00am News. 4.30am News. 5.00am News. 5.30am News. 6.00am News. 6.30am News. 7.00am News. 7.30am News. 8.00am News. 8.30am News. 9.00am News. 9.30am News. 10.00am News. 10.30am News. 11.00am News. 11.30am News. 12.00am News. 12.30am News. 1.00am News. 1.30am News. 2.00am News. 2.30am News. 3.00am News. 3.30am News. 4.00am News. 4.30am News. 5.00am News. 5.30am News. 6.00am News. 6.30am News. 7.00am News. 7.30am News. 8.00am News. 8.30am News. 9.00am News. 9.30am News. 10.00am News. 10.30am News. 11.00am 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Fishy stories, frolics, fundraisers' football

I was torn for a starting point this morning between a documentary about the Government's fishing policy and a costume romp called *Deacon Brodie*, which starred Billy Connolly. In the end I decided you would be more entertained by lunatic behaviour and implausible plot twists: therefore I shall start with the fishing policy.

People who think that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is dedicated to screwing up the beef industry are making a grave error. The ministry has a wider brief and should be given due recognition for its other role: screwing up the fishing industry. Its problems are often reported as being the fault of swartzy Spaniards and heartless Brussels bureaucrats, so thank heaven for *The Goldring Audit* (Channel 4, Saturday).

Mary Goldring is a financial journalist of a certain age for

whom an intelligent thirst for knowledge matters more than big hair and lip gloss. She is a business reporter who what Delia Smith is to cookery, complete with a set of no-nonsense stones at her throat. Thus she was easy to pick out as one of the more unlikely personages ever to sail on *ZZ 76*, a Newlyn trawler aboard which Goldring spent five days.

She (and I) could swiftly bring a tear to your eye, for the image of the brave hunter-gatherer gone forth into wicked seas for no wage beyond a share of the dwindling catch is a strong one. But there is a difference between men who fish and the fishing industry: all industries are careless as to the finite nature of their resource, and fishing is no exception. Goldring set aside sentiment and cut to key truths, of which I will highlight but one.

Politicians wish us to believe that the Spanish have played a

dirty trick by registering trawlers as British and thus taking a share of four fish quota. Eurosceptics are happy to see you think that the common fisheries policy, presided over by the feisty Emma Bonino, the EU's Fisheries Commissioner, is to blame for the fine mess we are in.

As Goldring demonstrated, there is more to it than that. The fishing industry accepts that to save stocks we must fish less. That is why the EU, many years ago, started paying fishermen to decommission their boats. The deal was that money from Brussels would match funds from individual governments.

Britain said no. Bonino told Goldring: "This has been the choice of the UK Government, maybe to decide that the fishing sector was not a high priority, so they allocated very little funds." Britain eventually signed

REVIEW



Peter Barnard

up for the scheme in 1992 but that was too late. British fishermen, strapped for cash and denied decommissioning money, had no choice but to sell their boats and, crucially, the licences that went with them. Enter the Spanish.

Does the UK Government have an answer to these charges? We don't know. Everybody who matters stuck their glosses over the gunwales for this film, except Tony

Baldry, the British Fisheries Minister. Goldring said that Baldry would talk only about overall policy and he would only do that if the interview was shown at the end of the programme. So Baldry wanted to make the programme if he was going to appear in it. He did neither.

Goldring's solution to the fishing crisis is radical: forcibly reduce the fleet and ban the sale to fishermen of endangered species such as cod and mackerel. "It is difficult to see anything less drastic having an effect," she said. Yes, I fear that it is.

Set alongside the grotesque *Min of Ag*, the story of an Edinburgh ne'er do well who designs a galleon and is ultimately hanged from it is but a small leap in the believability stakes. *Deacon Brodie* (BBC1, Saturday) showed a great deal of promise, but delivered very little of it. The story is based on a true one, but drama

is not convincing just because it is authentic.

Billy Connolly seemed to enjoy himself as Brodie. The story is set in 1788, so Connolly's beard had been expertly removed and rearranged on the top of his head. The BBC described the film as a "rollicking romp", therefore it contained several tarts with hearts, an array of inflating bosoms and a predictable escape from the gallows so that Brodie and his lady love could sail into the sunset.

The BBC has not been wildly successful with costume drama of late and I doubt that this example will detain the judges of the Royal Television Society for more than a moment. With some of the language expunged and a couple of necklines raised an inch or two it could be shown to children at bedtime as a change from *Rob Roy*.

Comic Relief last night began a

three-part series, *Balls to Africa* (BBC1), leading up to Friday's big night. The programmes nominally follow a Comic Relief all-star football team, the Sporting Noses, on a tour of Africa.

I am not among those who think that stars use charity work to boost their careers: surely being photographed with a Spice Girl is easier than spending a week under a mosquito net in Burkina Faso. Frank Skinner, David Baddiel, Angus Deayton and David Essex are among the celebrity players in the series, but the football is incidental to the glimpses of how Comic Relief money is spent.

I was impressed to see that not only had it provided water pumps in various villages but cash had also been used to train an engineer in each area who, if a pump fails, will fix it within two days. As Nick Hancock said: "When you consider the reputation of some British plumbers, that isn't bad at all."

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (14297)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (7) (59403)
- 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (7) (59126)
- 9.15am Style Challenge (4636403)
- 9.45am Kilroy (4243768)
- 10.30am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (44565)
- 11.00am News (7) and weather (6666565)
- 11.05am The Really Useful Show (7871294)
- 11.35am Change That (8456128)
- 12.00am News (7) Regional News and weather (7315234)
- 12.05pm The Alphabet Game (5354487)
- 12.30am Going for a Song (8624655)
- 12.55am The Weather Show (7986229)
- 1.00pm O'Clock News (91590)
- 1.30am Regional News and weather (8358774)
- 1.40am Neighbours Helen begins the long road to recovery while Dennis and Libby are caught in a compromising position. A simple lunch date turns into a disaster for Mal (1125331)
- 2.05am Where Pigeons Go to Die (1990) Story of the affection between a young boy and his ageing grandfather. Directed and starring Michael Landon (7040039)
- 3.30am Playdays (214013) 3.50am Pingu (8886039) 3.55am Badger and Badger (8886735) 4.10am Gadget Boy (1213900)
- 4.35am Record Breakers Gold (5331887)
- 5.00am Newsround (7) (3591590)
- 5.10am Blue Peter (7) (816331)
- 5.15am News (7) (145619)
- 6.00am Six O'Clock News (871)
- 6.30am Regional News (823)
- 7.00am This Is Your Life (5010)
- 7.30am Here and Now First of a three-part investigation into homelessness (107)
- 8.00am EastEnders Ricky has some fast talking to do when he's forced to explain his recent actions, while Grant decides it's time to get his rather complicated love life sorted out (7) (4658)
- 8.30am Goodnight Sweetheart Gary discovers he's not the only one who can travel back in time (8215)
- 9.00am Nine O'Clock News (3497)
- 9.30am Panorama Vivian White looks into the future of motoring in Britain (7) (535403)
- 10.10am Comic Relief: Balls to Africa The second report from Africa (239519)
- 10.40am The Beast of Lenny Henry (390315) WALES: 10.40am The State (759316) 11.20am A Parent's Guide (80497) 11.35am Film 97 with Barry Norman Casting a critical eye over the latest new releases, including *The English Patient*, starring Ralph Fiennes and Kristin Scott-Thomson; *Mother Night*, with Nick Nolte; and *Shirley* MacLaine in *Evening Star*, the sequel to *Terms of Endearment* (237774)
- 11.40am The Fugitive Kind (1980) With Merton Brando, Anna Magnani and Joanne Woodward, Walden profiles the life and times of the former Labour leader Harold Wilson (7) (718478)
- 11.45am News (7) (145619)
- 11.55am Weather (51720)
- 12.00am The Midnight Hour (75459)
- 12.05am Open University: Perpetuating Dreams (51904) 1.30am Modern Art (53843) 2.00am Nightwatch TV: Geography (15904) 4.00am BBC Focus: Ruffie (400) 4.30am Royal Institution Discourse (50121) 5.30am RCN Nursing Update (78189)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode
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BBC2

- 6.00am Open University: Going to School in Japan (7242128) 6.25am Democracy: Fact or Fiction? (7327881) 6.50am Babies' Minds (7) (915690) 7.15am Sea Her Breakfast News (7) (7153831) 7.30am Captain Caveman and the Teen Angels (8394923) 7.55am Blue Peter (7) (816331) 8.20am Pingu (7) (3554768) 8.35am Hairy Jeremy (7) (6020652) 8.35am Lassie (7) (5973381)
- 9.00am Daytime on Two: TV8 (46923) 9.30am Go for It (7002584) 9.45am Technology Starters (7007039) 10.00am Playdays (87855) 10.30am Landmarks (2304381) 10.50am Look and Learn (2497045) 11.10am Zog Zag (9306132) 11.30am Teaching Today (8132) 12.00am Bible in Animation (39687) 12.30pm Working Lunch (86229) 1.00am History File (4758255) 1.20am German Globo (8687620) 1.25am Landmarks (4784750) 1.45am Storytime (83442923)
- 2.00am Pingu (7) (3554768) 2.05am Hairy Jeremy (7) (2730768)
- 2.10am Lady Luck (1948, b/w) Romantic comedy starring Robert Young and Barbara Hale. Directed by Edwin L. Marin (410774) 3.55am News (7), regional news and weather (867652)
- 4.00am Today's Day (836) 4.30am Ready, Steady, Cook (720) 5.00am Esther (8316) 5.30am Seniors Pot Black featuring Cliff Thorburn (300)
- 6.00am The Simpsons (151328)
- 6.25am Space Precinct (7) (775522)
- 7.10am Electric Circus (7) (522590)
- 7.30am The Sci Fies How a small group of scientists backed by political and business pressure groups scuppered an international agreement intended to halt global warming (749)
- 8.00am Top Gear Motorsport Tiff Needell with a new series (7) (2300)
- 8.30am Ray Mears' World of Survival: Necropolis: the horrors of Siberia's Tundra (7) (8107)
- 9.00am Victims of Rage (1996) starring Joclyn Smith and Brad Johnson. A woman marries a body-builder who has been taking steroids and has no control over his temper. Directed by Armand Mastroianni (7) (2768)
- 10.30am Newsnight (303671)



Harold Wilson in 1969 (11.15pm)

- 11.15am Walden on Wilson Brian Wilson profiles the life and times of the former Labour leader Harold Wilson (7) (718478)
- 11.45am News (7) (145619)
- 11.55am Weather (51720)
- 12.00am The Midnight Hour (75459)
- 12.05am Open University: Perpetuating Dreams (51904) 1.30am Modern Art (53843) 2.00am Nightwatch TV: Geography (15904) 4.00am BBC Focus: Ruffie (400) 4.30am Royal Institution Discourse (50121) 5.30am RCN Nursing Update (78189)

CHOICE

Cutting Edge: The Lost Boy
Channel 4, 9.00pm
It is getting on for six years since Ben Needham, then 20 months old, disappeared on the Greek island of Kos. The family had gone out to Greece to escape unemployment in Sheffield and planned to start a new life. The loss of Ben left his mother, Kerry, distraught and suicidal. His father was sent to prison for burglary. But the boy's grandparents, Eddie and Christine, have never given up hope of finding him alive. Nick Godwin's sympathetic film records their latest efforts, after the announcement of an increased reward led to a fresh wave of sightings. The likelihood is that Ben was taken and sold for adoption, an ill-considered but a driving one. The trail leads Eddie and Christine to a gypsy village in northern Greece, but they have been through so many disappointments that they keep their expectations low.

Kavanagh QC: Blood Money
ITV, 8.30pm
If the last series of *Kavanagh* sagged a bit, it was because it was too long, the meaty court cases, tended to be put on one side in favour of less than gripping excursions into the great barrister's home life. The lesson seems to have been learnt. We do visit the Kavanagh household tonight, just as young Matt is expecting his A-level results. But this is only a brief interlude between more compelling legal cases. The big case nearly ruins John Haver Kavanagh and Nicholas Jones's smug Jeremy on opposing sides. A man dies on a hospital operating table, apparently of a heart attack. But his widow (Sheila Hancock) is not convinced and decides to sue. Joanne Simon plays the young surgeon accused of negligence. Matthew Hall's script is as rich in courtroom details as it is perceptive about chambers politics.

Walden on Wilson
BBC2, 11.15pm
According to Brian Walden's thoughtful lecture, Harold Wilson is the forgotten man of British politics. Despite his record of winning four general elections, he is a neglected figure, disowned even by the modern Labour Party. Walden's harsh explanation is that Wilson's name has become synonymous with dishonesty. This stems, Walden says, from Wilson's leadership style, which was to appear to be all things to all factions. Walden is not a huge fan. He praises Wilson as a kindly man with no side and a brilliant leader of the Opposition. But in government his vision of a radical new Britain, summed up in his failure to tackle deep-seated economic problems. As for Wilson's surprise retirement, Walden suggests that the least sensational explanation is probably correct. Wilson had simply had enough.

For the Love of...
Channel 4, 12.30am
The series on unusual passions continues to give good value at its scheduling at a time when most of us have gone to bed. It is a complete puzzle. The people who appear on the show may be unorthodox, some would say bonkers, but that is the point. Tonight they are number freaks, calling on ancient beliefs to convince us that, say, 22 or 93, has some deep and special significance. One of the pundits, Chris Gutteridge, believes that 23 is not only a holy number but points to the 23rd of the month, along with five, that it turns up in *The Simpsons* and *The X-Files*. Amazing. Another numbers buff has found strange patterns in the Portsmouth and Brighton telephone books. You do not have to believe any of this, but it will give you a switch off.

HTV

- 6.00am GMTV (5810942)
- 9.25am Chain Letters (7) (4548294)
- 9.55am Regional News (7) (5330381)
- 10.00am The Time, the Place (74381)
- 10.30am This Morning (7) (2249190)
- 12.00pm Regional News (7319478)
- 12.30am News (7) and weather (6715881)
- 12.55am High Road (8627652)
- 1.25am Home and Away (7) (4758678)
- 1.50am Murder, She Wrote: The Great Train Robbery starring Angela Lansbury, Keith Mitchell and Diane Baker (7106774)
- 2.40am Savannah Drama series set in the Deep South (1268652)
- 3.20am News (7) (1371577)
- 3.25am Regional News (7) (1608328)
- 3.30am Tots TV (4464377) 3.40am Rainbow Days (9776010) 3.50am Gooty (4921233) 4.05am Scooby's Amazing Adventures (2587010) 4.20am Snap (7) (1204852) 4.45am Air Attack (7) (5259039)
- 5.10am Bagdad Cafe (5497855)
- 5.40am News (7) and weather (215497)
- 6.00am Home and Away (7) (4758678)
- 6.25am HTV Weather (827923)
- 6.30am HTV News (7) (519)
- 7.00am Wish You Were Here? Mr Motivator visits Butlin's holiday camp in Wales; Judith Chalmers visits Cuba; and John Carter goes on a coach tour of Castle (7) (478)
- 7.30am Coronation Street Fraser Henderson stars a hired thug to sort out Andy; and Des finds himself attracted to Samantha after their parachute jump (7) (403)
- 8.00am World in Action: Sex Education An investigation of what 16-year-old children want from, and already know about, sex education. Plus: experts react to their views (7) (6126)



Sheila Hancock as Sarah (8.30pm)

- 8.30am Kavanagh QC: Bloody Money With John Thew and Sheila Hancock and Joanne Simon (7) (2768)
- 10.00am News at Ten (7) and weather (54942)
- 10.30am Regional News (7) (474229)
- 10.40am Nash Bridges: Internal Affairs Nash investigates a judge's murder, and unwittingly triggers an internal Affairs investigation with Don Johnson and Cheech Marin (879039)
- 11.35am Highlander: Swashbuckling time-travelling adventures, starring Adrian Paul and Peter Howitt (107872)
- 12.40am Football Extra (4859625)
- 1.25am FI: Australian Grand Prix (7) (4913188)
- 2.25am Club Nation (4041850)
- 3.25am God's Gift (2521072)
- 4.00am Sound Bites (3890366)
- 5.00am Coronation Street (7) (45607)
- 5.30am ITN Morning News (63614)

CENTRAL

- As HTV West except:
- 12.55pm-1.25am A Country Practice (6627652)
- 1.50am Blue Heelers (7106774)
- 2.40am World of Wonder (2685107)
- 2.50-3.20am High Road (5073300)
- 5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (5497855)
- 6.25-7.00am Central News (420519)
- 11.35am New York News (178687)
- 12.30am Football Extra (2859448)
- 1.15am Stand and Deliver (476188)
- 2.15am Real Stories of the Highway Patrol (83255)
- 2.45am Film: The Golden Daze (3386343)
- 4.05am Central Jobfinder '97 (1360237)
- 5.20am Asian Eye (8229527)

WESTCOUNTRY

- As HTV West except:
- 12.20pm-12.30am Illuminations (7319478)
- 12.55-1.25am Gardeners' Diary (6627652)
- 1.50am Brief Encounters (11767213)
- 2.20am A Country Practice (2226855)
- 3.10-3.20am Breakaways (1255126)
- 5.10-5.40am Home and Away (5497855)
- 6.00-7.00am Westcountry Live (81774)
- 10.30am Westcountry News (785381)
- 10.45am Nash Bridges (861010)
- 11.40am Prisoner: Cell Block H (711836)

ANGLIA

- As HTV West except:
- 12.19pm Anglia Air Watch (7321213)
- 12.55-1.25am A Country Practice (6627652)
- 1.50am Blue Heelers (8358497)
- 2.50-3.20am Jungle on Your Doorstep (5073300)
- 5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (5497855)
- 6.25am Anglia Weather (678872)
- 6.30-7.00am Anglia News (420519)
- 10.29am Anglia Air Watch (280403)
- 10.30am Anglia News and Weather (785381)
- 10.45-11.40am Nash Bridges (861010)
- 11.40am Highlander (711836)
- 5.00am Newsround (7) (3591590)
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